



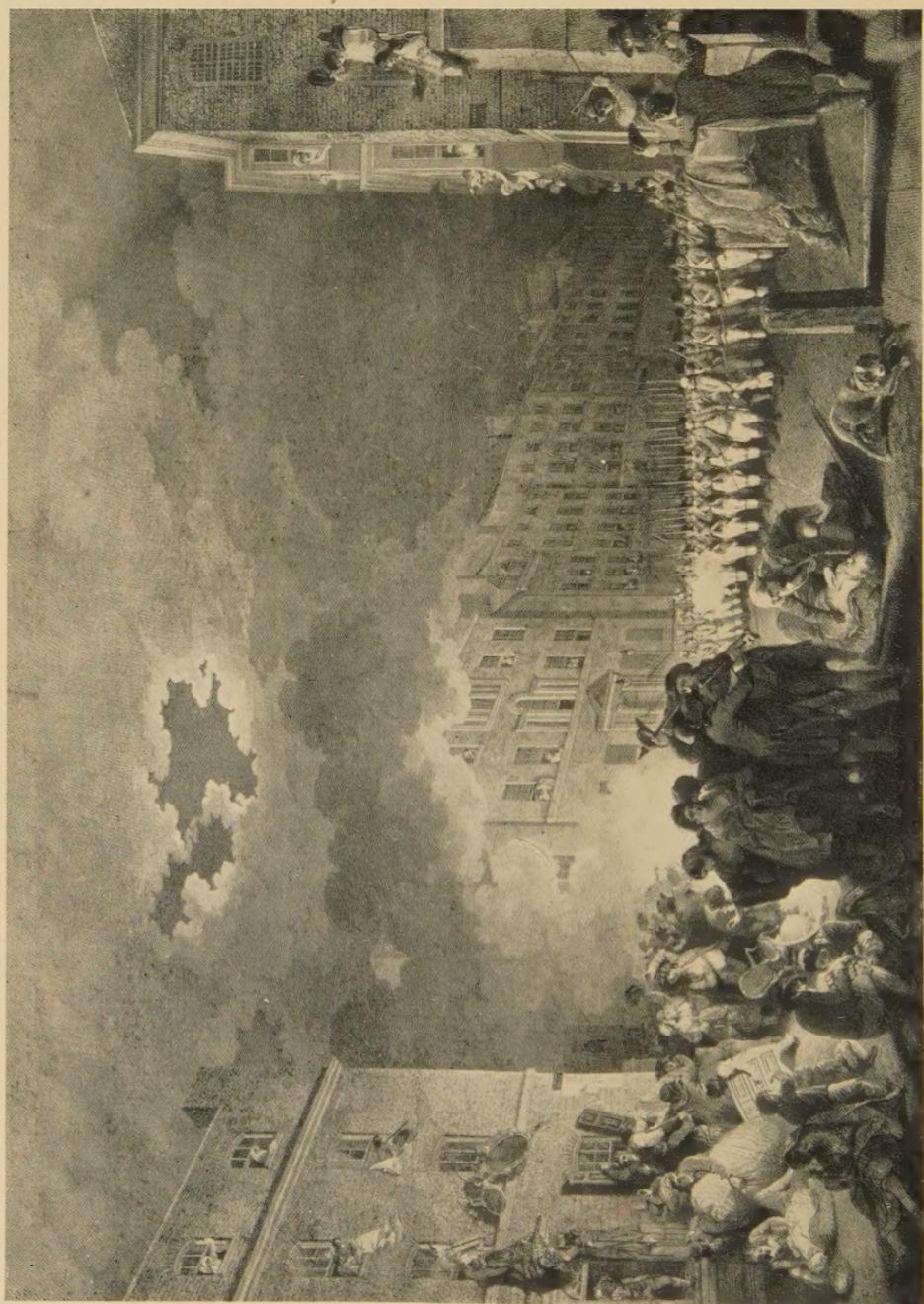


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THE GORDON RIOTS

The Riots in Broad Street on 7th June, 1780



THE GORDON RIOTS

By

J. Paul de Castro

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P R E F A C E

“THE last great outburst of aggressive Puritanism,” wrote Mr. Walter Thornbury in 1873, “has been painted by the late Mr. Dickens with such powerful light and shade that the general reader is apt to consider the subject as exhausted. But Mr. Dickens . . . was far too great an artist to bind himself to dull facts, or to encumber himself with details. To him the Gordon Riots were merely a background to the admirable characters which sprang living from his prolific brain. *Barnaby Rudge* is no more a complete narrative of the events he has rendered so famous than *Hudibras* is a history of the civil wars.”

Dickens’ scenic descriptions are based on such newspapers and periodicals, contemporary with the disturbances, as were accessible in the novelist’s day, but the present writer has had the advantage of studying the following additional sources which, save the last, were unavailable in 1840 :

(a) Two bound volumes preserved in the Public Record Office of the correspondence that passed almost hourly between Lords Stormont and Hillsborough and the chief military and civic authorities.

(b) Two bound volumes, part of a series known as the *Amherst Papers* (lately presented to the War Office), which contain the Commander-in-Chief’s

directions to, and disposition of the troops, reports from commanding officers, with the innumerable applications for military protection from all parts of the metropolis which reached him by day and by night.

(c) Bishop Hay's correspondence in W. Forbes Leith's recently published *Memorials of Scotch Catholics*.

(d) Documents of the first importance published by Dr. E. H. Burton, D.D., from the Westminster Cathedral Archives. They record the concerted action in Roman Catholic circles for furthering the Catholic Relief Bill.

(e) Contemporary reports made to the French Government, and now lodged in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris.

(f) The diaries of Susan Burney, Archbishop Markham, Robert Smith, John Wilkes, Lady Anne Erskine, William Mawhood, Mrs. Samuel Hoare, George Cumberland, James Hutton, Walter Spencer-Stanhope, William Hickey.

(g) Various correspondences issued under the aegis of the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

(h) Nine informing letters written by the 4th Earl of Jersey, an eyewitness, the property of Earl Spencer.

(i) The correspondence of George III. with Lord North.

(j) The letters of Col. Charles Stuart written to his father, the Earl of Bute, during the Riots, and recently made public by the Hon. Mrs. Stuart Wortley in *A Prime Minister and his Son*.

(k) The correspondence of Sir Robert Keith, and of Lord Malmesbury.

(l) The graphic descriptions of the Riots by Sir Samuel Romilly.

(m) A very rare pamphlet, *Innocence Vindicated*, written and published by Lord George Gordon in 1783.

These records disclose the trend of affairs that led to this sudden exhibition of politico-religious fury, and the many causes that kept it aflame. They justify the assertion of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu that "Posterity will know more of this affair than we."

The ensuing pages, it is submitted, will establish :

1. That the unfortunate management of the War against the American Rebellion exercised a greater influence in stimulating the Riots than has been recognised.

2. That until it became patent that the metropolis was at the mercy of the rioters their methods were countenanced (to use no harsher expression) by the Aldermen of the City, whose dislike of George III. knew no bounds.

3. That Lord George Gordon was a revolutionary of the first water, and the Catholic question chanced to be the pretext that fast offered itself to his restless political ambitions for setting the country aflame.

4. That the Government's endeavours to repress the outrages were more strenuous and extensive than has yet appeared, and but for a misconception of the law prevailing at the War Office—based on an opinion obtained from Lord Hardwicke in 1732

when Attorney-General—the military would have grappled with the disturbances at a less dangerous stage.

5. That the sense of insecurity was intensified by a rumour everywhere rife, but never substantiated, that French and American agents were at work among the rioters.

6. That in the words of the present Lord Fitz-maurice “the real lesson which the Riots taught was the necessity of re-organizing the police.”

To Earl Spencer I beg to tender my grateful thanks for permitting the use of the several letters written during the Riots by George, fourth Earl of Jersey, to the Countess Spencer, mother of the celebrated Duchess of Devonshire. The late Earl of Jersey, in whom resided the copyright of these letters, courteously acquiesced in their publication.

To the Army Council I am particularly indebted for granting me access to the recently acquired *Amherst Papers* before their transference to the Public Record Office.

To Mons. Paul G. Dottin of the Foundation Thiers, in Paris, I beg to express my thanks for taking a copy of two documents preserved in the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères.

Mrs. Stuart Wortley and Mr. John Murray have very obligingly permitted me to reproduce considerable portions of the letters in which Colonel Charles Stuart reports to his father, Lord Bute, the progress made by the military in the City during the all too eventful week.

To Dr. H. Selfe Bennett and to Mrs. A. J. Finberg I am under great obligations for many pertinent suggestions, and to Mr. J. M. Bulloch I owe an expression of gratitude for bibliographical notes of much utility.

Grateful acknowledgement is tendered to the Governors of Bridewell and Bethlem Royal Hospitals for permission to reproduce an entry in a Committee-book describing, shortly after the event, an attack on Bridewell Hospital on 7th June, 1780. As the record only came to light since the press-proofs were returned to the printers, the additional information, which enhances the terrors of "Black Wednesday," necessarily appears in an Appendix (Appendix No. IV).

The author may perhaps be permitted to say in conclusion that the material collected for the purposes of this book far exceeds the information eventually incorporated. It is hoped that a series of close prunings will have succeeded in providing the reader with a historical survey that makes no unreasonable call either on his time or on his patience.

J. PAUL DE CASTRO.

1 ESSEX COURT, TEMPLE.

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MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN 1780

<i>First Lord of the Treasury</i>	-	-	LORD NORTH
<i>Secretaries of State</i>	Southern Department -	-	VISCOUNT STORMONT
	Northern Department -	-	EARL OF HILLSBOROUGH
	Colonies -	-	LORD GEORGE GERMAIN
<i>Lord President</i>	-	-	LORD BATHURST
<i>Lord Chancellor</i>	-	-	LORD THURLOW
<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>	-	-	EARL OF DARTMOUTH
<i>Admiralty</i>	-	-	EARL OF SANDWICH
<i>Ordnance</i>	-	-	VISCOUNT TOWNSHEND
<i>Secretary at War</i>	-	-	C. JENKINSON, ESQ.

“ There are, in every populous community, many different strata of society, that lie in darkness . . . to each other . . . there are many chambers that have absolutely no intercommunication. Afterwards when . . . years have passed away—by means of posthumous memoirs, letters and other literary monuments—they are all brought, in a manner, face to face ; and we, their posterity, first see them as making up a whole, of which they themselves were imperfectly conscious. Every year makes further disclosures ; and thus a paradox is realised, that the more we are removed from personal connection with a past age . . . oftentimes the better we know it.”

DE QUINCEY.

I

THE SIMMERING

“ Of a sudden appeared those fearful riots, to which the most rank intolerance gave origin, and Lord George Gordon a name. Then the midnight sky of London was reddened with incendiary fires, and her streets resounded to the cry of an infuriated mob ; then our statesmen had to tremble not only for their hearths but for their lives.”—LORD MAHON’s *History of England*, 1854, vii. 23.

THE Lord George Gordon Riots which made the month of June 1780 memorable in the annals of the eighteenth century were marked, wrote Gibbon, who was then in London, by a dark and diabolical fanaticism such as he had supposed to be extinct.

The prime mover in this outburst of anti-Catholic frenzy was born on 26th December, 1751, in Upper Grosvenor Street, London, George II. being his godfather. He was the third son of Cosmo George, third Duke of Gordon (who died in the August following his son’s birth) and of Catherine, daughter of William, Earl of Aberdeen. Place-hunting and place-giving being still rife, a military commission was secured for Lord George in his infancy. His earliest years were spent in Scotland, but on 26th June, 1758, when seven-and-a-half years old, he was sent to Eton. In view of his tender age it is consoling

to find that his two brothers, Alexander and William, were entered at the same time and at the same house, that of Dame Elley. Alexander, the fourth Duke, was the patron of Burns; Lord William Gordon was the intimate friend of Lady Sarah Lennox, whom George III. had some thoughts of making his Consort. From Eton Lord George was sent, against his inclinations, into the Navy, the family interest at the War Office being reserved for his brother Lord William, already entered upon a military career. Lord George served on the American station, making a six months' stay in Jamaica.

By 1772 Gordon had risen to a lieutenancy, and considering himself consequently entitled to a command, he applied to Lord Sandwich for promotion. Lord Sandwich informed him that others senior to himself could not be passed over, but as frigates and ships were then being built he would remember him when they were completed. Thereupon Lord George, conceiving himself ill-used, told the First Lord of the Admiralty that "he could no longer be deceived by empty unmeaning promises, and with the utmost deliberation he took his commission out of his pocket and returned it to Lord Sandwich, telling him he might do with it what he pleased."

Having quitted the service, Gordon retired to Scotland. A political career had been in his contemplation for some little time, and a Parliamentary election being soon after announced, he contested the seat for Inverness-shire, a constituency represented since 1761 by General Fraser of Beauly

Castle—eldest son of Lord Lovat of the 1745 rebellion—despite frequent absences on foreign service. Gordon readily acquired the art of canvassing :

“ He visited every part of the county. He played on the bagpipes and violin to those that loved music. He spoke Gaelic, and wore the tartan plaid and philabeg in places where they were national. . . . He gave a ball at Inverness to which he brought the young and old from every part of the county. He hired a ship and brought from the Isle of Sky the beautiful family of Macleods, consisting of fifteen young ladies, the pride and admiration of the North.”¹

Fraser, perceiving that Gordon’s tactics were menacing his popularity, deemed it prudent to enter into negotiations with the Duke of Gordon, offering to purchase a seat elsewhere for his formidable antagonist. Ultimately, Lord George entered the House of Commons in 1774 as the representative, jointly with the first Lord Melbourne, of Ludgershall in Wiltshire, a pocket-borough, the property of George Augustus Selwyn. Thus Gordon became a Senator at the early age of twenty-three.

In appearance Gordon is described by Wraxall as being thin, of regular features and of pale complexion. “ He had the appearance,” he adds, “ as well as the deportment of a man of quality. There was, however, something in his cast of countenance and mode of expression that indicated cunning, or a perverted understanding, or both.” A boon companion, William Hickey, recalls him as being in 1776 “ a gay, volatile and elegant young gentleman

¹ *The History of the Rt. Hon. Lord George Gordon to which is added several of his Speeches in Parliament; and his most remarkable Letters to the eighty-five societies in Glasgow.* Edinburgh : Printed by James Murray, 1780.

of engaging manners," and as "sacrificing freely at the shrine of Bacchus." In character, a judicious observer, Samuel Romilly, who was no admirer, described Gordon as "endowed with a spirit of enthusiasm, and with the most determined resolution."

Lord North, who had been at the head of the Administration since 1770, was faced in 1778, when Gordon had been in the House some four years, with an Opposition so powerful that his resignation seemed impending. In America the War of Independence was taking the turn that England's enemies, France, Spain and Holland, no less than the colony, desired. The news of General Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga had just become known. Gordon was in strong sympathy with the American attitude, but he and his friends overstepped the limits of propriety by daily drinking success to her arms. In India Warren Hastings, strenuously engaged with the Mahrattas, was about to face Hyder Ali, who, with 90,000 troops, was descending from the table-land of Mysore to the plains of the Carnatic.

In England Parliament was striving to secure an improved legal status for Catholics, induced thereto, in part, by the success of the Quebec Act of 1774, establishing Catholicism in Canada; and in part by motives of policy. For England was threatened with a Continental War in the midst of her unsuccessful American hostilities, and Government conceived it expedient to conciliate Catholics with a view to obtaining their services in the army. Lord



I

THE R^T. HON^{BLE}. LORD GEORGE GORDON,

President of the Protestant Association?

North turned to the Scottish Catholics of the Highlands as a promising field for recruits. To them he despatched, as confidential agent, Sir John Dalrymple, a baron of the Exchequer of the Scottish Judiciary. Sir John, by way of overture, interviewed Bishop Hay, Vicar Apostolic of the Lowland district.¹ After due consideration the Bishop wrote to Dalrymple on 8th February, 1778, urging, as a pacificatory step, the removal of three at least of the many impediments then imposed by law on Catholics :

- (a) the repeal of the law against hearers and sayers of Mass ;
- (b) the repeal of the disabilities respecting the holding and transference of land ;
- (c) the amendment of the attestation oath, whereby military recruits should only swear fidelity to the sovereign.

Returning to London, Sir John laid Bishop Hay's letter before Lord North, Lord George Germain and Lord Suffolk, each of whom approved of the suggestions—and with reason, since there had occurred a rupture of diplomatic relations with France following on her action in regard to the revolted colonies.

Dalrymple next consulted Bishop Challoner, but he found the Pope's Vicar Apostolic of the London district timid and apprehensive. The proposals were then submitted to Mr. Matthew Duane, an

¹ George Hay (b. 1729) was educated as a physician at Edinburgh : he once acted as surgical attendant to Prince Charles.

eminent Roman Catholic conveyancer¹ ; he thought the projected measure imprudent if not dangerous. Dalrymple made enquiries whether the English Catholics would combine with the Scottish Catholics in approaching the King, and he was referred to William Shelden, a jesuit-trained lawyer of Gray's Inn. On 2nd April, 1778, Dalrymple and Shelden met, and the latter has left a record of their consultation :

" I strongly opposed any application to our clergy in temporal matters, the English Roman Catholic gentlemen being quite able to act for themselves in these affairs. I called on the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Shrewsbury, Lord Petre, Sir Robert Throckmorton, Mr. Fermor, Sir Edward Swinburne and others. They generally concurred heartily ; a few demurred, but would follow the opinion of the majority of the body."

It was decided to call a meeting at the Thatched House Tavern for 11th April, 1778. The gathering duly took place, Lord Petre presiding, when a resolution to present an Address to the King was passed, and a committee appointed to formulate its terms. It was further resolved that the draft should be submitted to a general meeting on 27th April, and that every Catholic of position be invited to subscribe the same.

Though the fact was little known the Address emanated from the pen of Edmund Burke ; " never was anything so much admired, Lord Mansfield said it exceeded anything he had ever seen," records one contemporary. Lord Weymouth being deputed to mention the matter to the King, the Address,

¹ Though Catholics were then disqualified from being called to the Bar, they could practise 'under the Bar.'

signed by 207 Catholics, was presented at a levee on 1st May by the Earl of Surrey and Lords Petre and Linton. The text ran :

" Most Gracious Sovereign. We your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Roman Catholic peers and commoners of your Kingdom, most humbly hope that it cannot be offensive to the clemency of your Majesty's nature, or to the maxims of your just and wise government, that any part of your subjects should approach your presence to assure your Majesty of the respectful affection which they bear your person, and their true attachment to the civil constitution of their country.

Our exclusion from many of the benefits of that constitution has not diminished our reverence for it.... We have patiently submitted to such restrictions as the Legislature thought expedient . . . We beg leave to assure your Majesty that we hold no opinion averse to your Majesty's Government, or repugnant to the duties of good citizens ; and we trust that this has been shown more decisively by our irreproachable conduct for several years past under circumstances of public discountenance and displeasure, than it can be manifested by any declaration whatever.

In time of public danger when your Majesty's subjects can have but one interest, and ought to have but one wish and sentiment, we humbly hope it will not be deemed improper to assure your Majesty of our unreserved affection to your Government, of our unalterable attachment to the cause and welfare of this our common country, and of our detestation of the designs and views of any foreign power against the dignity of your Majesty's crown, the safety and tranquillity of your Majesty's subjects.

We do not presume to point out the particular means by which we may be allowed to testify our zeal to your Majesty and our wishes to serve our country. But we entreat leave faithfully to assure your Majesty that we shall be perfectly ready on every occasion to give such proofs of our fidelity as your Majesty's wisdom and the sense of the nation shall at any time deem expedient."

At the conclusion of the levee the King expressed himself as highly gratified with the Address, and it

became generally recognised in political circles that a relieving Bill would be introduced as a non-contentious measure. To this end a committee considered the framework of a Bill, and were assisted by John Dunning, the foremost advocate of the day.¹

The Bill purported to relieve Romanists from the disabilities and penalties imposed by the Act of 1699, whereby Papist priests could be easily apprehended and perpetually imprisoned for keeping schools. Catholics had been rendered incapable of purchasing land, and debarred from taking land by descent, devise or limitation if any Protestant next-of-kin claimed the inheritance. As the law then stood a Catholic child by becoming Protestant could deprive his parent of his estate. In one case a landowner endeavoured to reduce a lady, a near relative of his own, to poverty by withholding her jointure, a rent-charge on his estate, on the plea that being a Catholic she could enjoy no interest in land. Lord Camden² warmly espoused her cause, and satisfied that she had no remedy at law he brought in and carried a special Act for her relief.

The Government requested Sir George Savile to introduce the Bill. Whether Savile was wholly disinterested may be questioned. Many thousand handbills were being distributed in Ireland at the instigation of Charles Carroll, a Roman Catholic of the American Congress, promising to every emigrant to the States a grant of land with full toleration. The

¹ Recorder of Bristol. Solicitor General 1768-1770. Mover of the famous address "that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." Created Lord Ashburton.

² Charles Pratt, Earl Camden, Lord Chancellor 1766-9. Recorder of Bath.

alarm caused to the large landowners in Ireland was most effective in furthering the cause of the Bill, “for what would become of the estates of Rockingham, Shelbourne, Hillsborough, Sir George Savile and others if the people left that kingdom? Many were also of opinion that the French might make a descent on Ireland, and were greatly apprehensive that the Roman Catholics of that country would join them.”¹

Savile’s Bill was eloquently seconded by Dunning, who in the course of his speech observed that at the instigation of the most abandoned of mankind—common informers—magistrates and judges were bound to enforce against Catholics all the penalties of the Act of William of Orange.

The debate was continued by Thurlow, the Attorney-General, who strongly supported the Bill, but thought “that to repeal the penalties against papist priests exercising their functions freely, required some consideration.” When Thurlow sat down Lord North rose, and the Speaker, thinking he wished to address the House, called upon him, but the Premier only bowed and walked out of the House, which some observed was better than any speech. Support came also from Lord Beauchamp, Henry Dundas and Serjeant Adair, when the House unanimously agreed to the motion with great applause.

The Bill was introduced into the Peers by Lord Rockingham, where it was as before carried without

¹ *The Life and Times of Bishop Challoner, 1691-1781.* By Edwin H. Burton, D.D., 1909.

a division. It included an obligatory oath to be taken by all those who claimed the immunity the Act afforded. It received the Royal Assent on 3rd June, 1778.

The next day Bishop Challoner issued a Pastoral Letter throughout the London District to all the Catholic Clergy both Secular and Regular : “ . . . requiring that all and every one of you should offer up your most ardent prayers for our most gracious sovereign King George III., his Royal Consort and all the Royal family, as also in your respective congregations you should recommend to the rest of the faithful to offer up also their prayers for the same intention.” The Vicars Apostolic of the Northern and Midland Districts adopted Bishop Challoner’s letter, while Bishop Walmesley of Bristol, Vicar for the Western District, ordered his priests, in addition, to insert the King’s name in the Canon of the Mass.¹

“ No Catholic,” wrote Charles Butler of Lincoln’s Inn, himself a Catholic, “ who recollects the passing of the Bill will ever forget the general anxiety of the body, while it was in its progress through Parliament ; or the smile and friendly greeting with which his Protestant neighbour met him the day after it had passed into Law.”

But this elation of the Catholics was short lived. It was suggested by members that the Relief Act, whose provisions applied to England only—the Act of William III. having passed before the Union—should be extended to Scotland, where stringent statutes of a like nature could still be enforced.

¹ Burton’s *Life of Bishop Challoner*, ii. 208.

Thereupon, Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate, promised to introduce a similar measure for North Britain in the ensuing session.

The proposal inflamed the fanaticism of Edinburgh and Glasgow. “It is certain that a letter of Bishop Abernethy gave the signal for the explosion of the fanatical frenzy which quickly broke out in every town and parish in Scotland.”¹ Gordon, who had taken no part in the debates, at once sided with the Northerners, by whom he was invited to Scotland. “The reception he met with,” says a newspaper writer,

“was indeed sufficient to infatuate any man. His natural volatility of temper, his youth, his thoughtlessness, gave charms to popularity that were irresistible (*sic*). Those who are acquainted with the character of the Scotch and know to what a height they carry their religious zeal may conceive in some sort the adoration that was paid to him. He was considered as the champion of the Kirk, and they venerated him as the highest character of human exaltation. Thus courted and applauded it is not to be wondered at that he became ambitious of success. He entered fully into their designs, and transformed himself into the habit and appearance of a Presbyterian. He became President of all their religious associations, and took an avowed and active part in all their measures.”²

To this period belongs the satirical print dedicated to the Protestant Association. It depicts Lord North bestriding mad John Bull, whom he lashes and urges to Scotia, the land of Thistles. The premier is burdened with the Ways and Means of raising taxation for financing the American War. George III. directs the Constitution, but there is tied about his

¹ *My Own Life and Times, 1741-1814.* By Thomas Somerville Minister of Jedburgh, p. 182. Edinburgh, 1861.

² *Morning Post*, 18th July, 1780.

eyes the loose silk band, knotted at the back, which in private life he usually wore round the neck, as seen in Ramsay's portrait. Thus blinded he neither sees the list of Papist enormities which Truth—not quite naked be it noted—illuminates and displays, nor does he perceive whither the premier is heading. From the King's pocket protrudes *Magna Charta*; it will fall to the ground, and be lost to the people. Dundas, the Lord Advocate, on one side, spears the Bull northwards; on the other a determined attempt is made to arrest the animal's career. Two members of the Opposition, in endeavouring to restrain the enraged beast, have snapt the trace, and are violently thrown to the ground, the thong still in their hands. The portion of the yet intact trace is firmly gripped by Lord George Gordon, attired in a Highland plaid. He is resolved, if the snorting brute cannot be stayed, to cross the Tweed with it. On the left of the picture lies the English Church in somnolence, whilst the Pope and his vicars apostolic are actively sowing confusion and heresy in the hope of reaping Power, and of securing the Crown which is taking substantial form above his Holiness's mitre.

To add to the unrest in Scotland incendiary resolutions of provincial synods, and hostile pamphlets, handbills, newspaper paragraphs and sermons were actively disseminated. Scottish Catholics, alarmed for their lives and property, addressed a letter to Lord North entreating him to forgo his intention of putting them in the same position as their brethren in England. Though the letter was published, the agitation had gone too far. Early in

Religious and Political Rule of the Devil.



II. To the Respectable Association of Protestants and to every worthy supporter
of both Church and State. Published 2nd June, 1780

1779 riots occurred in the two leading Scottish cities. In Glasgow the factory and stock-in-trade of the Catholic potter Bagnal, who had brought hither his art from Staffordshire, was wholly destroyed, whilst he and his family were forced to fly for their lives into the fields. In Edinburgh houses and shops of reputed Catholics were assailed and plundered. On 1st February the whole city of Edinburgh roared out ' Knock down, kill, burn the Papists Bishop Hay had been informed of what was going on, and he judged it proper to leave London and return to Edinburgh to exert himself on behalf of his people.'¹ Such persons as advocated freedom of opinion became objects of vengeance, and among those threatened was the distinguished historian, William Robertson. Catholic ladies were compelled to take refuge in Edinburgh Castle. Missives were circulated worded thuswise :

" Men and Brethren—Whoever shall find this letter will take it as a warning to meet at Leith Wynd on Wednesday next in the evening to pull down that pillar of Popery lately erected there.

Edinburgh, Jan. 29, 1779.

A PROTESTANT.

P.S. Please to read this carefully, keep it clean, and drop it somewhere else."

In obedience thereto the zealots mustered and set on fire the newly-built Roman Catholic chapel in Chalmers' Close, and pulled down the house of Bishop Hay. Whilst the chapel was in flames the Bishop himself arrived from London. Meeting large crowds, and ignorant of their purpose, he

¹ *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.* By W. Forbes. Leith, 1909, vol. ii. p. 375.

enquired of a woman what it all meant. "Sir," said she, "we are burning the Popish chapel, and we only wish we had the Bishop to throw into the fire." Unrecognised, Hay made good his escape. The troops were called out, only to be resisted and pelted, and were not permitted to fire in self-defence.

Hostility to the Catholic Relief Act propagated itself into England, and, emboldened by the success of the Scottish riots in preventing the introduction of such a measure for Scotland, a Protestant Association was inaugurated in London in February 1799 for the purpose of furthering the "No-Popery" movement, and for procuring the repeal of the Act passed in the previous year. Protestant clubs were likewise formed in London and in the great provincial towns. On 12th November, 1779, Lord George was in eulogistic terms offered the Presidency of the English Association also.

The character of these meetings, and incidentally a pen-portrait of the President, differing from the earlier portraiture of Wraxall and of Hickey, is preserved in a contemporary account :

"One of their meetings, holden at the Old Crown and Rolls in Chancery Lane had been postponed on account of the death of Lord George's mother. On the day of the meeting the Duchess of Gordon had not been dead but one short week.¹ The room though large was considerably too small for the assembly. There did not appear to be a single individual among them who bore the appearance of anything like a gentleman. The business of the meeting was to agree on the terms of a Petition to Parliament, to open a subscription, and to appoint a deputation who should wait on Lord North to request his support. The hair of the President, lank, without curl or powder, in the precise form

¹ The Dowager Duchess died on 10th December, 1779.

of antient puritans, his mild, quiet calm tone of voice (for that evening at least), his deep mourning—an artful glance at the cause of it in the few words his lordship said ; all these circumstances could not fail to affect such a meeting.”¹

It being decided to petition Parliament for the repeal of the Act, Lord George wrote to Lord North :

“ Welbeck Street, Friday, 31 Dec. 1779. Enclosed I send a copy of the resolutions of the Protestant Association. You will see that I am nominated one of their deputation to wait upon your Lordship. . . . Your Lordship knows that you did not delay a single hour in returning me a satisfactory answer when I had the honour to write on the business of the Protestant Interest at Edinburgh ; and I trust that as you are a Friend to the Protestants in London your Lordship will show a similar attention to their application.”

Lord North appointed the 4th January, 1780. The deputation duly waited at Downing Street. Gordon reported later that “ after a conference of nearly two hours they understood his Lordship declined either to present or support the Petition. The President then desired Lord North to give his answer under his own hand, that he might deliver his Lordship’s words exactly to the Association.” Lord North complied :

“ Downing Street, 5 Jany. My Lord : After having fully reconsidered all that passed yesterday at my house I see no reason to alter the opinion I then expressed, and must beg leave to decline presenting the Petition your Lordship left with me, or engaging to support any Bill that may be brought into Parliament for repealing the Act for the relief of Roman Catholics in 1778.”

Thereupon the Association passed a resolution that their President apply to Protestants in Scotland to

¹ *Fanaticism and Treason : or a dispassionate history of the rise, progress and suppression of the rebellious Insurrection in June 1780.* By a Real Friend to Religion and to Britain. London : printed for G. Kearsly, 1780, p. 19.

unite with them in petitioning for a repeal "of the late Act in favour of Popery." On the 17th and 19th January advertisements appeared in the *Public Advertiser*:

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION.

Resolved. That an application be made to the clergy and churchwardens of the several parishes within the cities of London and Westminster requesting them to recommend the Petition of the Association to their parishioners, and to permit it to lie in their several vestries to receive the signatures of their inhabitants.

That an application be made to the ministers, elders, deacons of the several congregations of Protestant Dissenters within the cities of London and Westminster requesting them to recommend the Petition, and to permit it to lie in their several vestries to receive the signature of their people.¹

That the Petition lie at Wills' Coffee house, Bank Street, Cornhill. That this Association do adjourn to 21st Jany. to Mr. Greenwood's Great Rooms in the Haymarket at six in the evening.

G. GORDON, *President.*

14th Jany., 1780.

JAMES FISHER, *Secretary.*

On 24th January a second announcement appeared:

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION

Resolved. That one copy of the Petition do lie at the House of the President in Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square,² and that another copy do lie at the House of the Secretary in Goulston Square, Whitechapel.

That another copy do lie at the Standard Tavern, Leicester Fields. . . .

That the Association do adjourn to the 28th inst. to the London Tavern in Bishopsgate Street at six in the evening.

G. GORDON, *President.*

21st Jany., 1780.

JAMES FISHER, *Secretary.*

¹ "The Dissenters in England, who have been long struggling for more civil liberty, took it into their heads that if they would support the Catholics on this occasion, the Catholics would support them again; and the liberty they wished for, if the Catholics succeeded, could with less propriety be denied them." Bishop Hay, 24th July, 1778, *Forbes*, ii. 370.

² Gordon occupied No. 64 Welbeck Street; it was the second house from Wigmore Street on the left-hand side. It is now part of the site occupied by John Bell & Croyden, Ltd.

On 31st January it was further announced :

Public notice is hereby given that a General Meeting of the Protestant Association will be held at Coachmakers' Hall on Friday, 11th February, at six o'clock in the evening, and that the Petition of the Association will lie at the London Tavern. Subscriptions for prosecuting this important business will be received at the following bankers, viz. : Messrs. Hankey & Co., Fenchurch Street ; W. Fuller, Son & Co., Lombard Street ; and Darrien, Melto & Martin, Finch Lane ; and by the Secretary to the Association.

JAMES FISHER, *Secretary.*

These and many other resolutions were posted at street corners, on walls and on window-shutters throughout the metropolis.

Calm and mild though Gordon may have been at the Crown and Rolls (*v. p. 14*), he could be extremely violent in the House, as witness a few sentences from a speech made on 25th November, 1779 :

" Mr. Speaker : I should not have troubled the House were it not for the absurdities with which the speech from the Throne is replete. It is totally destitute of common sense. His Majesty tells us that in consequence of our addresses he has ordered certain papers, relative to Ireland, to be laid before us. Why was not that order made in consequence of the addresses from Ireland ? Was the Irish Parliament unworthy of its Sovereign's notice ? The truth is his Majesty's ministers are no less odious in Ireland than they are in England. In Scotland the people are ready to break with the Ministry as in Ireland. The indulgences given to Papists have alarmed the whole country, and they are determined, with the utmost resolution, to guard against a people that are become such favourites in the eyes of the Ministry. I do not deliver my own sentiments only ; government will find 120,000 men at my back who will avow and support them ! The people have now printed their sentiments and resolutions on their grievances, they will shortly be published, and the moment they are ready I will deliver them to the King and the Prince of Wales

that they may learn from them upon what terms the Scotch will be governed:

The coast of Scotland, Sir, is left naked and defenceless ; the people of Dumfriesshire had therefore petitioned for arms to defend themselves. That country is in such a situation that Paul Jones¹ might with the utmost facility have destroyed Glasgow, Leith, Greenock and Edinburgh in one expedition. Thus circumstanced could it have occurred to any one that the Administration would have denied so reasonable a requisition ? Wicked as the minds of the Ministry are, could anyone have imagined that they dared to have committed such an outrage upon common sense, common policy, or the common rights of the people ? Yet, Sir, the answer which these men returned was a positive refusal ! I will, Mr. Speaker, read you a letter from the Secretary of War to the Duke of Queensberry on this subject. [His Lordship then read the letter ; after which looking at the Secretary of War he continued], and, you Charles Jenkinson, how dared you write such a letter ? Robert Bruce would not have had temerity enough to have done it ; and yet the Secretary of an Elector of Hanover has had that presumption ! The Royal Family of Stuart have been banished from their kingdom for not attending to the voice of the people, and an Elector of Hanover is not afraid to disregard it ! Sir Hugh Smithson, Earl Percy, Duke of Northumberland, armed cap-a-pe, marches at the head of all the cheesemongers and grocers from Temple Bar to Brentford,² and the present Earl of Douglas is not entrusted with arms ! The Scots, Sir, are justly irritated at the scandalous partiality ; nor are they less exasperated in point of religion as they are convinced in their own mind that the King is a Papist."

After such an outrageous attack on the king it speaks well for George III. that he consented to give Gordon a personal interview shortly after. Walpole notes on 29th January, 1780 :

" There was an extraordinary phenomenon in the King's closet. Lord George Gordon asked an audience, was

¹ The naval adventurer (1747-1792), who served in the French, American, and Russian navies.

² In his capacity of Lord-lieutenant of Middlesex.

admitted and incontinently began reading his Irish pamphlet, and the King had the patience to hear him above half an hour. His Majesty then desired to be excused, and said he would finish the piece himself. ‘Well,’ said the lunatic apostle, ‘but you must give me your honour that you will read it out.’ The King promised, but was forced to pledge his honour.”

Walpole concludes with a wish that reads weirdly in the light of succeeding events : “ It is to be hoped this man is so mad that it will soon come to perfection.”

Gordon’s further audiences with the King—to which he was entitled by virtue of being a Duke’s brother—are recorded in a pamphlet written by himself in 1783 entitled *Innocence Vindicated*. “ As soon as I became their President,” says he, “ the Association resolved that I should present their appeal to the King.” His deportment at St. James’s makes curious reading : “ On my going to his Majesty I requested him to call into the cabinet some of his confidential counsellors, or his secret advisers to be present, and mentioned the Earl of Bute”—the Earl be it remembered who had forsaken the King but who was supposed still to exercise a secret influence—“ but the King declined to call in any of them as witnesses.”

For the Government to permit Sir John Dalrymple, a judge of the High Court, to engage in secret political negotiations had been an astoundingly unconstitutional proceeding, and Gordon smote the Ministry fairly with his criticism :

“ In my second conference with the King in his closet I suggested that it would appear strange to English Protestants if their humble Petitions for the repeal of the Popery

Bill were rejected by his confidential servants when the wise and resolute opposition of the Scots had been soon yielded to by Government ; and more especially when the dark secret should come out that the English Popery Bill was the result of a private correspondence with the head bishop of the Popish clergy in Scotland, carried on through one of his Majesty's own judges, for the diabolical purpose of arming the Papists against the Protestant Colonies in America. I told the King . . . that Blackstone in his *Commentaries* lays it down : 'That his Majesty's judges are the mirror by which the King's image is reflected.' "¹

Gordon further states that in the spring of 1780 Lord Petre at his own desire called on him at Welbeck Street.

" He endeavoured to prevail on me to withdraw from the Protestant Association—that they were in general a mean set of people—that it was entirely owing to me that they had become of consequence—that if I would withdraw they would dwindle away—that my great abilities and industry would give weight to any party—that the Roman Catholics had a very great regard for me. . . . To this I answered that my withdrawing from the English Protestants might be of no service to his Lordship's views, for heated as men's minds were upon the subject there might spring up some Wat Tyler who would not have patience to commune with Government, and might very possibly chuse to embroil the nation in a civil war. Lord Petre then said that he wished I would use my influence to postpone presenting the Petitions and not move for the repeal of that Act for five years, and at the end of that period to move for its repeal if I thought the Roman Catholics had made an improper use of it. I replied that if the Popery Bill stood as it was, and any one Papist should use half the honest pains to restore the hereditary family of Stuart to the throne that I took to promote the prosperity of the people, the present sovereign and the rest of the House of Hanover might find themselves in exile in a fifth of the time his lordship required. This seemed to puzzle Lord Petre, but after some pause he declared that the new oath the Roman Catholics took secured their allegiance to the House of Hanover. . . . He popt out that

¹ *Innocence Vindicated*, p. 20.

they had had some scruples at first about taking the new oath, but at a late consultation at Paris it was decided they were safe in taking it. Whether my countenance shewed any alarm, or whether Lord Petre thought it late and was tired, I cannot exactly determine, but his lordship then put up his papers. In getting up Lord Petre said he was afraid riots might happen on presenting the Petition. I instantly asked if he knew that any were intended, saying I never approved of such proceedings, and hoped he would let me know if ever he heard of any attempt of that kind. I told this conversation to the Rev. Erasmus Middleton, a member of the Committee of the Protestant Association."

" My third conference with the King," proceeds Gordon, " was of a quite different complexion. The President of the Association has something more to do than to receive and return compliments. Neither Lord North nor his other courtiers shewed either attention, respect or favour to me or to the Petitions I was presenting to the House almost daily. I determined to ascertain the King's own inclinations with respect to Popery, and whether he would or would not countenance the Petitions of his Protestant subjects. . . . My fourth conference with the King was on 19th May, a few days before the riots. It was asked by the advice of Sir Fletcher Norton, Speaker of the House of Commons, that I might be certain I made no mistakes in representing the King's opinions on a subject of such serious importance." Then follows a disclosure of the devious methods of the Speaker, then in bad odour in the matter of Supplies. " The Speaker hinted to me that as I intended to go again to the King I might at the same time sound his Majesty concerning the reformation of Civil grievances. I thought this rather out of my line of duty; however, I considered this judicious hint very seriously, Sir Fletcher Norton being generally esteemed one of the wisest men of the Kingdom.¹ . . . I told the King that I did not believe Mr. Burke and the leaders of the Opposition were true friends to the Protestant interest or to the people, or in right earnest for a thorough redress of their just grievances."

Gordon shewed a narrative of these conversations

¹ So wise that Lord Mansfield said of Norton's advocacy that " it was very like to mislead a judge and jury, and with him I found it more difficult to prevent injustice than with any man who ever practised before me." A. Polson's *Law and Lawyers*, 1840, i. 188.

with the King to Sir Fletcher Norton at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and asked the Speaker if it was not his duty to publish these matters by affidavit that all might know how egregiously the King was misled by his evil counsellors. Sir Fletcher, says Gordon, considered it a matter of the greatest consequence, and urged him to take the advice of counsel upon it, recommending Mr. Kenyon who lived hard by. Gordon observed that there was a Baron Maseres who had behaved well in Canada, concerning the Quebec Bill. Sir Fletcher replied that if Mr. Kenyon was not obtainable he should go to the Baron. Kenyon not being at home Gordon went to the Temple and found Maseres in chambers, to whom he offered the fee the Speaker had said was proper, but he refused it. The Baron¹ read the reports of the conferences very deliberately, and advised Gordon not to publish the matter in any form, nor to read them to the Association, but merely tell them in general terms that their petitions were not to be supported by Government.

Gordon concludes the second part of his *Innocence Vindicated* with the remark : " In my next narrative I propose to publish an account of a large sum of money that was directly offered to me if I would vacate my seat in Parliament, which bribe, when rejected with disdain, was followed with the promise of a command in the Navy." The continuation, though written, was never published, but Robert

¹ Francis Maseres, a Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer, 1773 to 1824. Deputy Recorder of London 1779 to 1783. Lamb refers to him in "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple."

Watson probably had the manuscript before him when he wrote in his biography of Gordon :

" His integrity was assailed in various ways ; bribes, threats, and promises were alternately made use of. Lord North waited upon him in Welbeck Street, and, after much courtly addresses, said " he had a message to communicate from his Majesty, and proposed his acceptance of a large sum of money and a leading situation in Parliament provided he would desert the Association. Lord George replied that he would neither accept a sum of money nor have any connection with Government whilst Lord North was minister."

Petitions were presented to the House almost daily, but so unreasoning was Gordon's hostility to Catholics that Members who supported him were ultimately forced to dissociate themselves from his rabid remarks ; as witness an incident on 11th April, 1780, when Mr. Gregory presented a petition from the inhabitants of Rochester :

" Lord George at once rose and . . . begged leave to read a memorial descriptive of Popery, and all its horrid consequence, which was drawn up in Ireland in 1626 by the Archbishop of Armagh and other prelates. Having finished the memorial, he said our Bishops ought to come to a similar resolution, but the Popish Episcopalianists of the other House were more intent on objects less worthy the attention of Christian prelates.

Mr. Turner, member for York, interposed and said the noble lord was perpetually interrupting business, and introducing matters directly personal. The noble lord had got a twist in his head if anything relative to religion was mentioned. He wished the noble lord well ; he could not bear, therefore, to see him render himself a laughing-stock and make-game of the whole House.

Lord George rose again . . . and contended that another massacre of Protestants, like that in Ireland, was to be dreaded. That such as came up to him as a member of Parliament said that they had not yet determined to murder the King ; they only considered that they were absolved from their allegiance.

Mr. Gregory, the introducer of the petition, rose and declared that those who had subscribed the petition were not of such sentiments as the noble lord had described. They were firm in their loyalty, as good and as peaceably inclined as any of his Majesty's subjects, and so high was their love and zeal for their Prince that there was not one of them who would not willingly lay down his life and fortune in his service.”¹

Perhaps Gordon's most insolent remark, directed obliquely at the King, was uttered a few days later. A member, presenting a petition to the House, trailed it along the floor to exhibit its numerous signatures. “What is all this?” interjected Lord George. “With a deal of pulling the petition seems to extend from your chair, Mr. Speaker, to the door of the House. In a few days, Sir, I shall present you the petition of the Protestant Association. It will extend, Sir, from your chair to a window at Whitehall that kings should often think of.”²

Pursuant to public advertisement, the Association met at Coachmakers' Hall on 29th May, when two thousand people were present. Lord George bid them “form an idea of the rapid and alarming progress that Popery was making in this kingdom; that the only way to stop it was by going in a firm, manly and resolute manner to the House, and there shew their representatives that they were determined to preserve their religious freedom with their lives. That, for his part, he would run all the hazards with the people, and if the people were too lukewarm to run all hazards with him they might get another President, for he would tell them candidly that he

¹ *Parl. Hist.* vol. xxi. col. 386.

² Burton's *Life of Bishop Challoner*, ii. 227.

was not a lukewarm man himself, and that if they meant to spend their time in mock debate and idle opposition they might get another leader." This speech was received with the loudest applause, and Lord George then moved :

" That the whole body of the Protestant Association do attend in St. George's Fields on Friday next to accompany his Lordship to the House of Commons on the delivery of the Protestant Petition. His lordship then informed them that if less than 20,000 of his fellow citizens attended him on that day he would not present their Petition ; and for the better observance of order he moved (a) That they should arrange themselves in four divisions ; (b) To know their friends from their enemies every real Protestant and friend of the Petition should come with a blue cockade in his hat. This also passed unanimously."

The full text of these resolutions appeared in the *Public Advertiser* on 31st May, 1st and 2nd June :

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION.

Whereas no hall in London can contain forty thousand men :

Resolved, That this association do meet on Friday next in St. George's Fields, at 10 o'clock in the morning, to consider the most prudent and respectful manner of attending their petition, which will be presented the same day at the House of Commons.

For the sake of good order and regularity this Association in coming to the ground do separate themselves into four distinct divisions : viz. the London division, the Westminster division, the Southwark division and the Scotch division.

That the London division do take place upon the right of the ground towards Southwark, the Westminster division second, the Southwark division third, and the Scotch division upon the left, all wearing blue cockades, to distinguish themselves from the Papists and those who approve of the late set in favour of Popery.

That the magistrates of London, Westminster and Southwark be requested to attend, that their presence may overawe

and control any riotous or evil-minded persons who may wish to disturb the legal and peaceable deportment of His Majesty's Protestant subjects.

By order of the Association.

G. GORDON, *President.*

London, May 29th.

It is clear from the last resolution that the probability of unseemly behaviour—the very suggestion of which so shocked the President when its possibility had been mooted by Lord Petre—was not overlooked, but the leaders here imply that if any occurred it would emanate from outside their pale. The tone of the manifesto gave point to the observation of Gibbon that “forty thousand Puritans, such as they might be in the time of Cromwell, have started out of their graves.”

As Gordon's demand to be accompanied by 20,000 petitioners was alleged to be an overt act at his impeachment for High Treason, it is here stated in his behalf, prematurely though it be, that the Rev. Erasmus Middleton in evidence told the Court that Gordon's action was based upon the fact “that it had been hinted that it was a very easy matter for a person to sit down and write four or five hundred names to a petition, and therefore it would be necessary that they should appear to their subscriptions, and convince the world that the names were not fictitious.”

The Association had strong supporters outside its ranks, and very particularly in the City of London, for two days later, on 31st May, the Court of Common Council entered the following minute upon their records :

" It is the opinion of this Court that the passing of any Acts of Parliament in favour of Papists, or repealing any Act against Popery, is totally repugnant to the true interests of this country ; and this Court doth request this city's representatives in Parliament to support any Bill that may be brought into Parliament for repealing the late Act in favour of Roman Catholics so far as relates to the establishment of seminaries for the education of youth, and the purchasing of lands within this realm of England."

Nor was the movement without supporters in Parliament. On 1st June Lord North presented a message from his Majesty that the House would enable him to defray any extraordinary expense on account of military services for 1780, and the Premier moved that the message be referred to a Committee of the whole House. Lord George Gordon " then rose and declared that he could not but oppose in every stage any new grant of supplies till his Majesty gave complete redress to the grievances of the people, both as to the late innovations in favour of Popery, as well as to the shameful abuses in the expenditure of public money." The House divided :

Tellers for Ayes : Mr. de Grey, Mr. Ord.
Ayes, 39.

Tellers for Noes : Lord George Gordon, Sir G.
Younger.
Noes, 19.¹

¹ *Public Advertiser*, 2nd June, 1780.

II

FRIDAY, 2nd JUNE, TO MONDAY, 5th JUNE

“ No event in our Annals bears any analogy with the scene then exhibited in the capital except the Fire of London under Charles the Second.”—SIR NATHANIEL WRAXALL, Bart.

AT ten o’clock on Friday, 2nd June, masses of Protestants—“ good Protestants ” as Johnson with a touch of irony called them¹—foregathered in St. George’s Fields, an undrained tract of land equidistant from Westminster and Blackfriars Bridges on the Surrey side. The construction of the latter bridge having enhanced the value of this low-lying district a few public institutions had been here erected. Mainly by the exertions of Sir John Fielding the Female Orphan Asylum was founded, in 1758, on ground now occupied by Messrs. Oakey’s factory. By the energy of Robert Dingley, the Magdalen Hospital, of which the blind Fielding was also a governor, was completed in 1772 ; the Peabody Buildings stand on the site. In the midst of the Fields could be seen “ a neat little regular town surrounded by a very high wall,” no less a place than the King’s Bench Prison. Within it John Wilkes—who will play a curious part in these pages—

¹ Boswell’s *Life of Johnson*. Edited by George Birkbeck Hill, 1887, vol. iii. p. 428.

III. WESTMINSTER BRIDGE (1799)



had been incarcerated in 1768 for a libel on George III. in the *North Briton*, and to St. George's Fields had speeded the tumultuous crowd, bent on releasing him by might and main, on whom the military were ordered to fire. Hard by stood the New or Surrey Bridewell. A mile eastwards rose another prison, the Marshalsea ; and yet a little further, at Deadman's Place, Bankside, stood the Episcopal prison of the Clink. In St. George's Fields towered the Obelisk, to-day a feature of St. George's Circus. It was erected in honour of Brass Crossby "for the conscientious discharge of his magisterial duty," this Lord Mayor and Alderman Wilkes having released certain printers apprehended on warrants issued against them by the House of Commons.

The weather on Friday, 2nd June, was oppressive. "It is hot and disagreeable in London, with the most violent lightning almost every evening," wrote Lord Jersey this day to Countess Spencer. Yet 60,000 persons, at an average computation, assembled in these Fields. "Le lord ecossais avait dit qu'il avait 40,000 hommes prêts et qu'il se mettrait à leur tête. Il a surpassé sa promesse car il a assemblé le double, d'autres disent le triple dans les champs de St. Georges vendredi dernier."¹ Each person was provided with a blue cockade, knot or rosette for hat decoration.² "Toute cette canaille avait des rubans bleus dans leur chapeaux et en caractère d'or Point de Papisme."¹

¹ Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères Paris. *Correspondence politique, Angleterre*, folio 533, p. 159.

² The cockades were made by Washington & Wharton, milliners, of 100 Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, at a cost of £2500.

Parading the ground with flags, chaunting hymns and psalms, the Scotchmen skirling their bagpipes, and, under the direction of their leaders, marshalling themselves into ranks, the four sections awaited their President. To this concourse, disposed in semi-military array, came at eleven o'clock Lord George Gordon in a coach. Dismounting and removing his hat, he harangued the crowd for a considerable time though audible only to a portion. During the speech the throng, in their eagerness to hear and see Lord George, pressed so closely around him, that, partly from the intense heat, and partly from the pressure of their numbers, Gordon was near being suffocated. When order again obtained, Gordon marched the four divisions three or four times round the Fields. At noon, beneath the streaming sun, the motley cohort sallied forth, six to nine abreast, "a glorious and most affecting spectacle," to the singing of hymns and heralded by blue banners. In accordance with a preconcerted plan one section, preceded by a man bearing on his shoulder the enormous parchment roll said to record 100,000 signatures, crossed the Thames by Westminster Bridge.¹ Frequenters of Alice's Coffee-house watched Lord George's partizans pouring into Old Palace Yard "like a tide." They noted also that most of them were dressed in their best clothes, and that on halting there was "an uniform elevation of voices in thrice repeated cheers."

Another section crossed by Blackfriars Bridge ;

¹ Previous to the march a tailor was employed to tack together the stack of skins. *The Public and Private Life of George III.*, by Robert Huish, 1821, p. 405.



Lord GEORGE GORDON,

London Director.

London Published as the Act does

for John Harris Sonnies

1801

a third, passing over London Bridge, marched through the city, traversing the Strand to Westminster. Of this last section a French source records “Bull et Paine, deux délateurs fameux, commandant ce corps.”¹ Soon there were signs of turbulence ; pedestrians pursuing their lawful concerns were insolently questioned for appearing undecorated with blue cockades. An acute observer of strong nerve—Robert Smith, the father of the joint authors of *Rejected Addresses*—standing at Somerset House gate-way perceived “a vulgar furious zeal upon their countenances.” It was becoming disconcertingly evident that the passive protestors who had taken the longer route through the city were fast swelling their ranks with undesirable recruits ; ill-conditioned ruffians drawn from its dark courts, blind alleys and unsavoury night-cellars. That such an outside and debased element infused itself, uninvited, among the crusaders was alleged at a later date to exonerate the Association. According to Thomas Evans, a petitioner :

“ About 11 o’clock as I was driving through Bridge Street, Westminster, to St. George’s Fields the coach was stopped by Mr. Smith, keeper of the Westminster Guildhall, saying he had something of great consequence to communicate to Lord George Gordon—that a number of weavers from Spittle Fields and tailors were mustering. I said I did not know Lord George, but would endeavour to see him. On entering the Fields I saw the Scots division, and in the centre was Lord George. I got into the ring with great difficulty, and informed his lordship, from Mr. Smith,

¹ *Deux délateurs fameux* = two notorious common informers. Paine had made a living on the rewards accruing from informing against Papists. Alderman Bull, Lord Mayor 1773-4, and M.P. for the City, aided and abetted him.

there would be a riot if more than 30 or 40 attempted to come to Westminster with the petition,¹ and asked him if he meant the whole body to attend. He replied, ‘By no means,’ that he intended to go to the House alone, and some time after the petition was to follow him to the Lobby and wait till he came out to receive it. I desired his leave to tell the people so. He said ‘With all my heart.’ I went to the side of the ring and told the people not to go to the House, that Lord George intended to go alone. Hearing they were forming divisions at the other end I drove to the Obelisk, where I saw the people in marching line with their faces towards the Borough. I told them they must not stir out of the Fields, for Lord George Gordon intended to go alone, and that there was sure to be trouble if more than 30 or 40 went to the House. They made answer : ‘I need not be afraid of that, for they were determined to make none.’”

It was this contingent that gathered the thunder clouds.

“The whole city was amazed, the house-tops were covered with spectators and every person awaited the event with anxious expectation.”²

Between half-past two and three, and despite Gordon’s recent assertions, the sections reassembled in and about Palace Yard, signalising their reunion by a “general shout.” Those that could crowded into Westminster Hall, where seeing Dunning, the seconder of the Bill, addressing the Court of King’s Bench, they immediately interrupted. The distinguished advocate resumed his seat as the intruders pressed forward to block up the avenues to the House of Lords. The judge adjourned the Court. An attempt to force the doors of the Lords’ Chamber

¹ The subject has a right to petition the King or Parliament, but by an Act of 1661 (13 Car. II. stat. i. c. 5) not more than ten persons may personally present the petition.

² *The Life of Lord George Gordon, with a philosophical review of his political conduct.* By Robert Watson, M.D., 1795, p. 20.

V. The Protestant Association at Palace Yard on 2nd June, 1780



was foiled by the exertions of the door-keepers acting under the direction of Sir Francis Molyneux, gentleman-usher of the Black Rod. The mob likewise became masters of all the approaches to the House of Commons. Such was the irony of the situation that the House of Lords was that day to consider a motion by the Duke of Richmond for introducing annual elections and manhood suffrage.

Romilly, then aged twenty-three,¹ who went to Westminster to hear the Duke's motion, observed that the gathering contained numbers of the lowest rabble, of whom many seemed ignorant of the very purport of the petition. One fanatic accosted him with the remark that the reign of the Romans had lasted too long. The young lawyer attempted to mingle in a circle assembled about a female preacher, well persuaded that she was supernaturally animated. The experiment was attended with some little danger: the absence of a cockade gave rise to suspicions, and he did not long remain unquestioned respecting his religious principles. But on joining in the cry "No Popery"—an insincerity frequently practised during the succeeding days by others also—Romilly soon pacified the mistrustful auditors, and one devout butcher insisted on shaking hands as a token of friendship.

Frederick Reynolds, the dramatist, then at Westminster School, entered Palace Yard with several play-mates soon after 2.30:

"when we witnessed the most novel and extraordinary proceedings.... The mob, shortly receiving the addition of

¹ Sir Samuel Romilly became Solicitor-General in 1806.

many thousands of disorderly persons, occupied every avenue to the Houses of Parliament, the whole of Westminster Bridge, and extended nearly to the northern end of Parliament Street, the greatest part of it, however was composed of persons decently dressed, who appeared to be incited to extravagance by a species of fanatical phrenzy. They talked of dying in the good cause. . . .”

For a brief period there was decorum. “ H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, the Dukes of Devonshire, Richmond, Roxburgh, the Earl of Shelburne, Lord Camden had their carriages conducted with great respect and honour to the doors of the House.” But this sense of propriety was either evanescent or purely local. Parties of the mob pressed towards Charing Cross, and as the carriages of Members of the Upper House approached they were driven back with cries of “ No Popery ! ” The foremost rushed to the horses’ heads, some to the windows demanding a re-echoing of their battle-cry, and the donning of a blue cockade, whilst others chalked “ No Popery ! ” on the carriage panels. From intimidation they passed to violence. Blue banners, waved from house-tops at Whitehall, signalled, says Walpole, to those below whom they should applaud, or whom molest. Markham, Archbishop of York, arrived betimes to attend a committee of the House. He was saluted with howls. His coachman whipped up the horses, and the prelate, bespattered with mud, succeeded in reaching the House. Lord Fortescue, regarded as one favourable to their views, was forced to dismount only. The coaches of Sir George Savile and of Charles Turner, member for York, were demolished.

Illness enforced the absence of Thurlow, now Lord Chancellor, but no sooner was his brother Thomas, the newly appointed Bishop of Lincoln, espied—he had had no hand in passing the Relief Act—than amid hisses and groans his carriage wheels were wrenched off, and himself seized by the throat till blood oozed from his mouth. Atkinson, an attorney of Westminster, dragged the half-fainting prelate into his house. Disguised in a curled wig, round hat and coloured coat belonging to Atkinson's son, and attended by his secretary, the bishop escaped into St. Margaret's Churchyard. A hackney coach was procured him and he drove to the Lord Chancellor's in Great Ormond Street, whence he sent for clothes from the Temple of which he was Master. He then posted to Finchley Common, where his wife was staying, to allay any report that might have alarmed her.

Lord Bathurst, Lord Thurlow's predecessor on the Woolsack, and now Lord President of the Council, on answering the mob stoutly, was diswigged. The Bishop of Lichfield's gown was unripped. Lord Townsend, Master of Ordnance, and Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Northern Division, arrived together. The latter, as a bitter opponent of American Independence, received gross maltreatment, and, had he been unaccompanied by Townshend, would have been in extreme danger. Much hustled they reached the House bereft of bag-wigs, their hair hanging loose around their shoulders. Lord George Germain was hissed and groaned at, and had porter thrown in his

face. Lord Stormont, Secretary of State for the Southern Division, was in the hands of the mob half-an-hour, "during which they took the most insolent liberties with him." Bepelted with mud¹ he was rescued only by the personal interposition of a friendly bystander, Mr. Drummond,² a gentleman of Lyons Inn who will figure again in these pages.

The Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, was particularly obnoxious to the rabble. A Popish priest recently tried before him, at the instigation of Paine, the informer, for saying mass, had been acquitted after a summing up unquestionably strained in the prisoner's favour.³ As his lordship neared the House the glasses and panels of his carriage were stove in. So soon as he heard of Lord Mansfield's danger, the still athletic Archibishop of York raced down from the Committee-room and sprang through the mob to the rescue. Other peers followed at his heels. The great lawyer—Pope's "silver-tongued Murray"—narrowly escaped with life.

The Duke of Northumberland was ill-treated :

¹ An excessively hot day did not preclude the existence of mud in the undrained streets of eighteenth century London.

² Drummond's pocket was picked of ten pounds whilst intervening on Lord Stormont's behalf. His lordship on the 4th June sent Drummond thirty pounds. Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic Series, 20 and 21, George III.

³ In directing the jury Lord Mansfield had said : "There are here two questions for your consideration. First : Is the defendant a priest ? Second : Did he say mass ? Now the only witness to the mass is Paine—a very illiterate man who knows nothing of Latin, the language in which it is said, and, moreover, he, as informer, is witness in his own cause ; for, upon conviction he is entitled to £100 reward." As the priest was acquitted this was probably a death-blow to Paine's living, and there is a strong inference that he did not head the Protestant Association through the city without a purpose.

both he and General Grant were relieved of their watches by pickpockets. The Bishop of Rochester was also severely handled.

A carriage driven furiously past the Horse Guards was seen to hold Lord North. A rush was made at the horses, and the vehicle was soon surrounded. Opening the carriage door, one fellow seized the Premier's hat. The Guards rode up and dispersed the crowd, but the hat was retained, cut in pieces, and the fragments sold at a shilling a piece. Lords Willoughby de Broke, St. John, and Dudley were also roughly treated.

Only two members of the House of Commons experienced the fury of the populace. Welbore Ellis,¹ Treasurer of the Navy, was pursued into the Westminster Guildhall. The mob smashed the windows, forced the doors, and Ellis would probably have been assassinated had he not been powerfully defended by Justice Addington² and his constables. Mr. William Strahan, King's printer and member for Malmesbury, and his eldest son, who chanced to be with him, were grossly insulted and maltreated.

In Lord Thurlow's absence, Lord Mansfield presided in the Upper Chamber, where, said the Duke of Gloucester to Walpole, "he quivered on the Wool-sack like an aspen" in consequence of the ordeal he had experienced. Romilly depicts the scene :

"Upon my getting into the House of Lords I found Lord Mansfield and five or six peers in great consternation

¹ He occupied Pope's villa at Twickenham, and in 1793 became Baron Mendip.

² Those who presided at the Police Offices before the passing of the Middlesex and Surrey Justices Act of 1792 were called Justices.

from news they had received of Lord Stormont's danger. Several peers came in soon after with their hair dishevelled, having lost their bags in the scuffle to get into the House. Several noblemen, among others Lord Sandwich, seeing the danger, had returned home; so that the House was rather thin. The Duke of Richmond, notwithstanding, rose to speak upon the motion he was about to make. He had proceeded about half an hour, though with frequent interruptions from the thundering of the mob at the doors and the shouting without, when one of the peers [Lord Mountford] abruptly entered to inform the lords that the populace had forced Lord Boston out of his coach, and that his life was in the greatest danger. Not long afterwards word was brought that Lord Ashburnham was in the same situation; at last, he was dragged into the House over the heads of the people, and apparently much hurt. The tumult becoming every moment more violent it was found impossible to go on with any business, and at half-past eight the House adjourned."

Lord Mansfield, says Kenyon, was forced to escape by water in a green coat and bob-wig.¹

Lord Stormont—whose official position was equivalent to the Home Secretary of later days—knowing that the Commons continued prisoners, dispatched a message to the Secretary at War, requesting him “to order forthwith a sufficient military force to be held in readiness in case the Civil Magistrate should find it necessary to apply for their assistance.”

Within the Lower House much time was taken up in discussing the general upheaval. When some degree of order obtained, Lord George informed members that he had before him a Petition signed by near 120,000 Protestants praying “A Repeal of the Act passed in favour of the Roman Catholics.” He moved to have the Petition brought up. The

¹ *The Manuscripts of Lord Kenyon.* Hist. MSS. Com., 14th Report, Appendix, part iv. 1894, p. 510.

motion was seconded by Frederick Bull, civic Alderman and Member for the City. Leave was accorded. Gordon then moved to have it taken into immediate consideration, and was again seconded by Mr. Alderman Bull. He had the support of nine members only, of whom Sir James Lowther was one.

During the heated debate that followed Lord George came several times to the top of the gallery stairs and apprised the people what bad success their Petition was like to meet with, adding that it was proposed to consider it on Tuesday in a Committee of the House, but that he disliked delays, for Parliament might be prorogued. The Rev. Thomas Bowen, Chaplain of the House of Commons, was an eyewitness :

“ The Lobby,” says he, “ was exceedingly crowded and the people very clamorous. After prayers I went to a seat under the gallery. I saw Lord George frequently go to the door ; I heard him say ‘ Lord North calls you a mob.’ A person in the Lobby said that if his lordship would tell them it was necessary for them to go, they would. Some time after I went up to the eating-room ; while I was sitting alone Lord George came in ; he threw himself into a chair and seemed overcome with fatigue. I told him a person in the Lobby had said that if he would say it was necessary for them to go they would, and added that it depended only on him to disperse them. He made no reply and soon left the room. I went downstairs and saw his lordship going to the little gallery to address the people. His Majesty, said he, is a gracious monarch, and when he hears the people ten miles round are collecting, there was no doubt he would send his Ministers private orders to repeal the Bill. He mentioned the attempt to introduce the Bill into Scotland. The Scotch, said he, had no redress until they pulled down the mass-houses. He then told them to beware of evil-minded persons, who would mix amongst them to incite

them to mischief, the blame of which would be imputed to them.”¹

Lord George then returned to the Chamber, and as the mob raged and roared in the Lobby General Conway made towards him and trenchantly remarked : “ I am a military man and I shall protect the freedom of debate with my sword. Do not imagine that we will be intimidated by a rabble. The entry into this House is a narrow one. Reflect that men of honour may defend this pass.” Colonel Holroyd’s warning was equally incisive : “ My Lord George, do you intend to bring your rascally adherents into the House of Commons ? If you do, the first man of them that enters, I will plunge my sword, not into his, but into your body.” Henry Herbert, afterwards first Earl of Carnarvon, followed Gordon closely with the avowed determination of inflicting instant death on him on the first irruption of the mob. Had the populace forced their way into the House, Gordon would not have survived, in Wraxall’s opinion, to recount the exploit. The Commons were now in a different frame of mind respecting their laughing-stock and make-game.

Lord Mahon addressed a section of the populace from the balcony of a coffee-house, urging them to retire to their habitations. Some of the passive Protestants, seeing and regretting the turn of affairs, betook themselves homewards, and withdrew their names from the Association.

¹ *The Trial of Lord George Gordon.* By William Blanchard, 1781, p. 42.

Gordon’s reference to the Scotch is confirmed in the account given by his adherent Robert Watson, whose ambiguous career will be later deployed.

A letter from Sarah Hoare, wife of Samuel Hoare, Quaker-banker of Lombard Street, expressed the anxiety manifested by educated and decorous civilians. It is written to her mother during the afternoon from her residence in Broad Street, City :

"Everyone is anxious to hear the conclusion of an affair which has made great noise in the city all this day. Thou hast most probably heard of the meeting which was advertised to be held in St. George's Fields, to proceed from thence in procession to the House of Commons to deliver a petition from the Protestants. Accordingly 50,000 men, divided into companys of 8000 each, with Lord George Gordon at their head, assembled at the hour appointed and marched through the city. The Guards were ordered out, and many feared that would produce great confusion. What reception they met with on their arrival I have not heard. I must own I have seldom felt my fears equally awakened."

When the Peers were released about 8.30 (*v. p. 38*) the Lower House was still imprisoned. Soon after nine a party of Horse and Foot Guards made their appearance. The former, led by Justice Addington, rode through the multitude, who opened to right and to left. As soon as the soldiery were well within their midst, the mob closed, shouted and hissed. The troops finding themselves at bay flourished their swords menacingly, but their antagonists, perceiving they refrained from doing execution, increased in insolence, pelted them with stones and flung faggots purloined from a neighbouring bakery.¹ The engagement drew off those who surrounded the doors of the House, and members were enabled to pass into the Lobby for a Division. The House adjourned at 11 p.m.

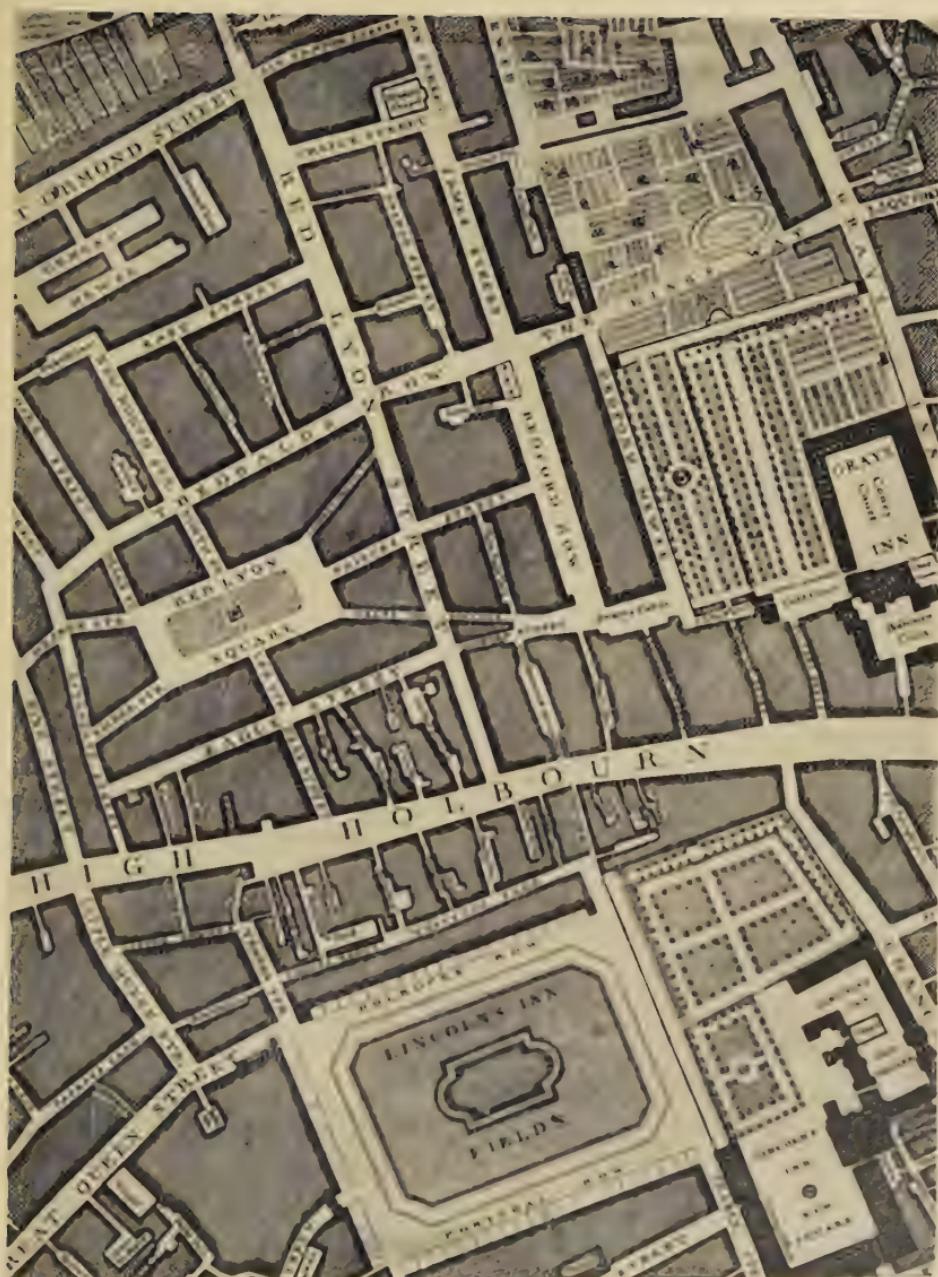
Amid the bawling and confusion detachments of

¹ James and Horace Smith. *A Family Narrative*. By A. H. Beaven, 1899, p. 30.

the mob paraded off to satiate their vengeance on Catholic mass-houses, incited thereto by Gordon's recent reminder that chapel-burnings in Scotland had thwarted the intentions of the Government. But their exertions had been strenuous and the heat intense, and they were impelled first to slake their thirst. They drank to intoxication. Then one detachment directed its course to Lincoln's Inn Fields, reaching it about eleven o'clock, the bustle and shouting forcing the residents in this fashionable district to rise from their beds.

What was there at so great a distance from Westminster Hall to attract this unruly crowd? On the western side of the Fields there sprang—as many still remember—a low, heavy, somewhat gloomy archway bearing on its keystone the inscription “Duke Street 1648,” which led, before the development of Kingsway, to Sardinia Street, as Duke Street was renamed in 1878, and thence into the Clare Market district. On the south side of the archway stood the chapel of St. Anselm and St. Cecilia, known as the Sardinian Chapel,¹ built in 1648 at a time when Roman Catholics in England were forbidden to possess mass-houses or even to hear mass. It became customary, therefore, for Papists to attend the chapels of foreign embassies where they were unmolested. “On every Sunday and Saint’s Day,” wrote Caésar de Saussure in 1729, “services are held in the chapels belonging to the ministers of Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and

¹ The recently erected church of St. Anselm stands in Kingsway between Africa House and Great Queen Street.



VI. The Environs of Lincoln's Inn Fields, Gray's Inn and Great Ormond Street, 1746

Sardinia. These chapels are always crowded." By 1780 the Sardinian chapel had become a religious resort of Roman Catholic nobility and gentry, and here Bishop Challoner sometimes officiated.

The entrance to the chapel was through the house of the Sardinian ambassador, then the Marquis de Cordon. The mob forced the chapel. The benches were wrenched up, tossed out and fired in the street, with the blazing brands of which they ignited the chapel within. The altar-piece, the work of the Chevalier Casali, said to have cost £2500, and the silver lamps were irretrievably lost. The ambassador saved nothing but two chalices.¹ The work of destruction proceeded until the edifice was 'gutted,' an expression much in the mouths of the depredators. Among the crowd of spectators was the Attorney-General, Alexander Wedderburn, a resident of Lincoln's Inn Fields, who strove to save the chapel, and was treated in a remarkably hostile manner for his activities. When the fire showed signs of spreading the engines were sent for, and the mob declining to work them, some of the spectators came to the rescue and set the water-sprays in motion. They were protected from interference by the tardy arrival of the Guards. Thirteen arrests were made. The troops appear to have been in sympathy with the rioters, for some were heard to

¹ "In October 1857 died at Hampstead Mrs. Ann Roberts, aged 93 years. It was Mrs. Roberts that took the sacred plate from the sacristy of Duke Street Chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields, when Lord George Gordon's rioters were trying to burn down the chapel, to the priest that was hiding at the Ship Tavern, at the corner of Turnstile, Gate Street, Holborn." *The Lamp*, a weekly illustrated journal, edited by James Burke, C. Dolman, 1857, p. 238.

say, "Great fools! why did they not pull down the buildings: the fire might have hurt their neighbours."¹ Madame de Cordon was fetched away by Thomas Walpole, Horace Walpole's cousin, to his own house: "Madame l'ambassadrice effrayée du danger tomba dans un évanouissement qui pouvoit etre dangereux étant fort avancée dans sa grossesse."²

Sampson Rainsforth, a Justice of the Peace, deposed at Bow Street:

"I was at the Sardinian Ambassador's chapel about 11.30. I seized one man and with Mr. Maberly's assistance brought him almost out of the mob. The mob said: 'Damn him, he (Rainsforth) is the late High Constable; knock him on the head.'

Q. The man was rescued?

A. Yes; I was in great danger of being knocked on the head. I immediately went down to Somerset House Barracks for the Guards. General Wynyard, the commanding officer, gave me his assistance. I mustered a hundred men with bayonets. I desired Mr. Maberly to take some of Sir John Fielding's people [*i.e.* Bow Street constables and runners] with him to seize the ring-leaders. When we came up Mr. Maberly went and seized Lind who was burning the chapel furniture. On my arriving with the soldiers, I desired every person in the chapel to be seized, and taken into custody. General Wynyard said he thought I understood something of the rioting business, and desired me to place the soldiers. I formed the soldiers all round three deep, and made a prison in the street. . . . I

¹ At that period the wilful demolition of a house was not a criminal offence; there was merely a civil remedy in damages. Mark also a letter from James Hutton to Lord Stormont: "13th June, 1780 . . . The doctrine said to be got among the soldiers is that having sworn to preserve the Protestant Succession, it would be a breach of their oaths to assist the Catholics, and that therefore they would not fire on any persons destroying Romish chapels, etc. This must have been put in their heads, for it never could have arisen from a soldier's reasoning."

² *Tumulte de Londres commencé le 2nd Juin 1780.* Garnelt, Panton Street, Haymarket, p. 8.

did not know any place so secure as the Savoy, for the watch-house would not have been in existence long ; therefore we carried the thirteen prisoners to the Savoy."

More soldiers being brought up, the mob dispersed.

Henry Angelo, the swordsman, who that night dined in Great Queen Street, records seeing ten bon-fires, the results of ransacking the chapel.

The mob now sought the abode of Bishop Chaloner, who lodged with a Mrs. Hanne at 25 Gloucester Street, the north-west corner of Queen Square, Bloomsbury.¹ Here the news was brought that the rioters had set the embassy on fire, and intended immediately to seize the person of the bishop and burn his dwelling. The bishop, well into his ninetieth year, had gone to rest, but his chaplains thought proper to trespass on his privacy. They woke him and begged him to rise, with warnings of a possible personal attack. But the bishop was adamant, expressing his confidence in the protection of God. Mr. Bolton, his chaplain, however, doubtful of his safety, insisted that he should not remain in such imminent danger. At length the Bishop consented to betake himself to a friend's house hard by where he passed the night. Soon after the tramp of many feet and the strident "No Popery" resounded in Gloucester Street. The rioters sought the Bishop, but they sought in vain, and he suffered no injury but the loss of some of his books and papers. When morning came Mr. Bolton hastened to the house of Mr. Mawhood, a respected Catholic in Smithfield,

¹ Gloucester Street still contains many old Georgian houses, but Nos. 24, 25 and 26 are rebuilt as a school.

and made arrangements for the Bishop's better safety.

Among the distinguished residents of Lincoln's Inn Fields was the eminent lawyer Lloyd Kenyon. He was provoked beyond measure, so wrote his wife, at Lord George's conduct, declared him mad, and hoped he would be confined.

The *Gazetteer* of the 7th announced: "Monday, died at her apartments in Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Mrs. Mary O'Donald, widow, who was so terrified at the outrage there last Friday night that she fell into fits which occasioned her death."

Meanwhile a large residue of the populace still lingered in Palace Yard. Lord Stormont wrote to the Magistrates at Bow Street and Litchfield Street and to Sir John Hawkins:

" June 2nd, 1780. 55 m. past eleven p.m.

I am informed that the tumultuous assembly of people still continues before the House of Commons. I desire you to take immediately every legal method to keep the public peace, and that a sufficient number of Justices, Constables and Peace Officers attend to-morrow to secure to the Lords and Members a free access to and regress from both Houses of Parliament."

This letter was immediately followed by a second admonition :

" June 2nd, 1780. Past Midnight.

I am this moment informed that a tumultuous set of people have broken into the Sardinian and Bavarian chapels. I desire you without delay to protect the said Foreign Ministers' Houses, and to endeavour to prevent further outrages."

A second detachment of the public disturbers had already departed from Palace Yard to execute

VII. The Environs of Golden Square, 1746



a similar commission at the Bavarian Chapel in Warwick Street, Golden Square, which they broke open and plundered. They then ravaged the house of Count Haslang, the Bavarian ambassador in Golden Square (now No. 24), on which the chapel backed.¹ Here great quantities of 'run' tea and other contraband articles were found, for the envoy, who had been in England since 1740, was a notorious receiver of smuggled goods. Two arrests were made. The mob then made tracks for the Portuguese chapel in South Audley Street, but were intercepted by the Guards who were brought on the scene by the energetic action of the Portuguese ambassador, M. de Pinto :

" Un autre corps attaqua le devant de la maison de M. le Comte d'Haslang . . . De là ils prirent le chemin de la chapell de Portugal, mais ils furent dispersés en route par un parti des gardes que M. Pinto prit à Whitehall, ayant été à dîner chez l'ambassadeur de Sardaigne quand en commença la destruction de sa maison." ²

After destroying the Sardinian and Bavarian chapels the rioters assembled in Moorfields, a district with a considerable Catholic population, but were on this occasion dispersed.

Gordon was not personally present at these disturbances. He left the House with Alderman Bull, who had seconded his motions, and drove off in the coach of Sir James Lowther, one of his nine

¹ No. 24 Golden Square is now the Fresbytery, and the Rector, the Rev. F. C. G. Brown, informs me that the Bavarian Minister occupied Nos. 23 and 24. He further states that the Bavarian arms are still over the Embassy pew, that the present church was rebuilt after the attack on it in 1780 and re-opened in 1788, and that it had previously been the Portuguese chapel and is so designated in Rocque's map of 1746.

² *Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris.*

supporters. On reaching his own house, Sir James directed his coachman to drive Gordon to Welbeck Street, as he appeared extremely fatigued. He reached home at 10.45, and did not go out again that night.

The next morning Walpole wrote :

" I smile to-day but I trembled last night. I knew the bravest of my friends were barricaded in the House of Commons and every avenue to it impassable.¹ Till I heard the Guards were gone to their rescue I expected nothing but some dire misfortune. . . . I had come to town from Twickenham in the morning. At eight I went to Gloucester House. About nine his Royal Highness and Colonel Heywood arrived. . . . The concourse had been incredible. . . . Colonel Heywood, a very stout man, and luckily a very cool one, told me he had thrice been collared as he went by the Duke of Gloucester's order to inquire what was doing in the other House ; he was not suffered to pass ; he said he never saw so serious an appearance and such determined countenances. . . . The Members were besieged and locked up for four hours. General Conway and Lord Frederick Cavendish told me there was a moment when they thought they must have opened the doors and fought their way out sword in hand."

The morning following, Saturday, 3rd June, " a vast concourse of people " assembled in and about Covent Garden as the thirteen prisoners apprehended the previous night were escorted to Bow Street by a strong party of the third regiment of the Foot. The escort would, on leaving the Savoy, cross the Strand, proceed up Southampton Street, and along the south sides of the Market and of Russel Street to the Police Office which stood on the west side of

¹ This was no exaggeration. The Solicitor-General at Gordon's trial said : " I will venture to say that there was no man in this town, who had any friend who was a member of the House at the time that did not tremble for his fate."

VIII. The Environs of Long Acre, Bow Street and East Strand, 1746



Bow Street three doors from its southern end.¹ Here sat several magistrates, in rota, among them the renowned and blind Sir John Fielding. The prisoners were brought before Justices Wright and Addington, who committed them all, save one who gave bail, to Clerkenwell Prison. The evidence against some of the accused was of the slenderest ; as Mrs. Lloyd Kenyon wrote : “ Eight of these poor fellows are taken up who little know what they have been about.” It was Wedderburn’s opinion that the soldiers, in order to reach the chapel, came so precipitately down Duke Street and through the archway that a number of persons, many of them mere spectators, were of necessity forced into the chapel as a place of refuge, and were there arrested.

Crowds continued all day to visit the ruins of the Sardinian chapel, and, as disquieting reports reached Lord Stormont, he issued at two o’clock in the afternoon an advisory note to the Magistrates at Bow Street and Litchfield Street and to Sir John Hawkins, directing them to pay constant attention to the chapels of the Foreign Ministers, and in particular to that of the Portuguese Minister in South Audley Street. A quarter-of-an-hour later Lord Stormont addressed himself to the Lord Mayor, warning him that tumults might arise within his jurisdiction. From Lord Petre, the Romanist peer, Lord Stormont received a request for protection :

“ Park Lane, 3rd June, 1780.—In consequence . . . of the intention of the mob to visit the neighbourhood of

¹ The present Police Court and Station, built in 1879, are situate at the north-eastern corner of Bow Street, occupying the whole frontage between New Broad Court and Martlett’s Court ; see map, Plate VIII.

Grosvenor Square to-night, and particularly to destroy my house, I take the liberty of . . . soliciting your protection in such a manner as will appear the most likely to prevent the intended mischief."

But it was already within Lord Stormont's knowledge that the west-end squares were an objective of the rioters, and he had previously sent instructions to Major-General Wynyard to order Guards from the Tiltyard and the Savoy into the neighbourhood of Hanover, Portman and Grosvenor Squares, to be in readiness should the magistrates require them.

As Lord Stormont's name will reappear in these pages it may be noted here that he was the eldest son of David, sixth Viscount Stormont, whom he succeeded in 1748. He possessed considerable experience of public life; he had been attaché at the British Embassy at Paris in 1751; Envoy Extraordinary to Saxony, 1756-9; Privy Councillor, 1763; Envoy Extraordinary to Russia, 1763-72; transferred to Paris, 1772. He entered the Cabinet as Secretary for the Southern Division in 1779. Winckelmann, who met Stormont at Rome, wrote of him as the most learned person of his rank he had ever known. On the death of his uncle the Earl of Mansfield in 1793 Lord Stormont succeeded to the title.

That evening the mob reassembled in Ropemakers' Alley, Moorfields. Mr. Malo, a native of Cambray who had settled in this district in 1743, carried on an extensive trade as a silk-merchant, employing upwards of two hundred looms and one thousand men. He received intelligence that the mob intended to destroy the Catholic Chapels in



IX. LORD STORMONT

Moorfields and then to demolish his own house. On the insurgents making their appearance before the chapels Mr. Malo sought Sir James Esdaile, the Alderman of the ward. Sir James immediately ordered out his constables, who, for the time, dispersed the mob. On returning from Sir J. Esdaile's house Mr. Malo met Mr. Gorman, a merchant of eminence. Together they proceeded to the Mansion House, reaching it about nine at night. They informed the Lord Mayor of the tactics of the mob, and of their threats concerning Mr. Malo's premises. The Lord Mayor appeared in the greatest confusion, declared he did not know what to do, and exhibited marked agitation. "You do not know," said his Lordship to Mr. Malo, "anything of the business. I have orders to employ the military if necessary, but I must be cautious what I do lest I bring the mob to my house. I can assure you that there are very great people at the bottom of the riot."

Here is an admission of personal knowledge possessed by the Lord Mayor, knowledge which he failed to impart to St. James's. His attitude is the more serious in that the American War had made the king highly unpopular in the city. Said Wilkes : "In this island only are persons found who doubt that the present war will end in the acknowledging of American independence." The hostilities had adversely affected exports. Enormous quantities of tea lay unsold. Alderman Bull, Gordon's friend and "Wilkes' tool," was a tea merchant in large business.

Lord Stormont, still apprehensive, did not relax

his efforts, and on Sunday morning he again urged the utmost watchfulness :

" To the Commanding Officer of the Horse Guards, White-hall. I must desire that an equal number of patrols with that employed yesterday do patrol this and to-morrow evening, and a larger number on Tuesday evening as there is still greater apprehension of tumult that day. They should be particularly attentive to the protection of the Houses and Chapels of Foreign Ministers, and in case of any the least appearance of disturbances should give the earliest notice to Mr. Addington, Justice of Peace in Soho Square." ¹

Lord Stormont had been well informed. The sultry heat of Friday had changed to piercing cold on Sunday the 4th, and the grippingly keen wind braced the malcontents to violence. Before nine o'clock in the morning they again proceeded to Moorfields, and assembling in front of the chapel in Ropemakers' Alley remained there till noon, doing no other mischief than breaking the windows. Returning in the evening they attacked the chapel with fury. Altars, pews, pulpits, vestments blazed in the streets, the heat scorching and cracking the walls of the chapel. The work of destruction continued through a great part of the night. Kennett, the Lord Mayor, was present, and thought his duty discharged by remarking : " That's pretty well, gentlemen, for one day ; I hope you will now go to your own homes." But so far from going home, they attempted an attack on a Catholic school, and on three houses inhabited by Catholics.

William Euston, an officer of the Sun Fire Office, deposed at a later date that he was with his engine

¹ For an account of the interesting career of Addington as clergyman, soldier, and finally as justice, see the *Farington Diary* under date 28th November, 1796, vol. i. p. 173.

at Moorfields on the 4th June and heard the commanding officer ask the Lord Mayor for orders : that his lordship desired him to be quiet and let him alone ; this was about eight or nine o'clock at night, and the mob were then pulling down the chapel. He knew the Lord Mayor well, having rowed him many score miles.

Ensign J. Gascoyne of the Coldstream Guards reported on 5th June :

" Marched with a Picquet of 30 men to Moorfields to reinforce Ensign Gould at eleven o'clock on Sunday night 4th June, 1780. Having joined Ensign Gould [who also had 30 men] I asked the Lord Mayor's commands, who not permitting us to act offensively we formed a circle round the fire to prevent the adding much to it which we were not able to do as the mob flung wood, doors, chairs, etc., over the heads of the soldiers from a window, which we could not prevent them from doing as the magistrate would not permit us to act. Returned to the Tower betwixt the hours of 4 and 5 o'clock this morning." ¹

Lord Beauchamp, who held a command in the Tower, stated that between nine and ten o'clock on Sunday evening he heard of a riot in Moorfields ; he went there, and at the end of the street where the mischief was doing there were a number of persons assembled—well-dressed citizens returning from their country walks. The mob were then making a large fire, and destroying the chapel. The firemen were ready to extinguish the fire, but said they could not get up unless the soldiers would make room for them. Lord Beauchamp spoke to one of the sergeants, who told him they waited orders. Thereupon his lordship went to

¹ *Amherst Papers*, vol. ciii.

Mr. Kennett and said, “This might be prevented, it is your duty to do something.” The Lord Mayor answered, “The whole mischief seems to be the destruction of some persons against whom the mob have a dislike.” Lord Beauchamp then told the Mayor that the House of Commons was to meet on the Tuesday following, when he should lay before it what he had observed of his conduct. The Lord Mayor, making no answer, turned away.

Though the chief magistrate was inactive, the foreign envoys thought fit to bestir themselves :

“The Catholic ambassadors had a meeting on Sunday in St. James’s Street, at the breaking up of which couriers were sent off to their respective courts with accounts of the demolition of their chapels ; to which are said to be added several pointed observations by no means in favour of the present Civil Government.”¹

During Sunday the number of hats displaying blue cockades rapidly increased. Although well-nigh an ensign of rebellion, the cockade was adopted by many for self preservation.

Sunday was no day of rest to Lord Stormont : in addition to a long letter of instructions to the magistrates at Bow Street and Litchfield Street, he tendered the following apology to Count Haslang :

“ à St. James, ce 4 Juin 1780.

Mons. Le Comte du Haslang. Monsieur—C'est par Ordre Expès du Roi que j'ai l'honneur de vous Ecrire, Monsieur, pour vous témoigner la sensibilité extrême avec laquelle Sa Majesté a appris l'outrage que la Populace a fait à votre maison et à votre chapelle. Si je ne pas suis acquitté de ce Devoir deshier c'est que j'ai attendu exprès pour pourvoir vous communiquer la Résolution ci-jointe de la

¹ *Public Advertiser*, 6th June.

chambre haute, par laquelle vous verrez, Monsieur, qu'on prendra les mesures les plus promptes et les plus efficaces pour découvrir et punir les coupables."

Lord Stormont refers to a proclamation issued promising a reward of £500 to those who would make discovery of the person or persons concerned in demolishing and setting fire to the Sardinian and Bavarian chapels.

As the Earl of Surrey had taken a prominent part in the presentation of the Roman Catholic address to the king, surprise was probably occasioned by the announcement that "on Sunday the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Gascoign read their recantations from the errors of the Church of Rome before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and received the sacrament, and have taken the oaths before Mr. Baron Hotham."

The same evening Walpole unbosomed himself to the Rev. W. Mason :

"Nothing ever surpassed the abominable behaviour of the ruffian apostle that preached up this storm. I always disliked and condemned the repeal of the Popish statutes, and am steadfast in that opinion, but I abhor such Protestantism as breathes the soul of Popery, and commences a reformation by attempting a massacre."

Lord Stormont had good reason to urge Sir John Hawkins to be watchful at the Sardinian embassy.

"About 5 o'clock on Sunday a tumultuous mob assembled at the Catholic Chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and in a few moments destroyed the repairs made the day before, pulled up the seats, broke the chairs, threw the cushions into the street, and were proceeding to pull down the walls, but a party of the Guards detached from the Somerset [House] Barracks prevented any further acts of violence. The mob

acted with great circumspection, having posted sentinels at all the avenues leading to the chapel.”¹

Lord John Cavendish wrote :

“ There were about thirteen persons taken up at Mons. Cordon’s, but I fancy the principals had taken care to withdraw in time. It is true that Mr. Kennett, the Lord Mayor, stood by last night, and did not in the least attempt to prevent the rioters.”

Charles Butler, the distinguished Catholic Equity draftsman of Lincoln’s Inn, was also present on Sunday night, and a record made by him places Kennett’s supineness beyond question : “ Lord Beauchamp, in my hearing, reproached the Lord Mayor with his conduct : to which his lordship only answered that ‘ the mob had got hold of some people and some furniture they did not like and were burning them, and where was the harm in that.’ ” Butler then adds “ Kennett’s first situation in life was that of a waiter at the King’s Arms, a notorious house of ill-fame : he afterwards had a brothel of his own ; then kept a tavern ; then commenced wine merchant, and afterwards became Alderman and then first magistrate of the first city in England.”

A letter from George, fourth Earl of Jersey, to Georgiana, Countess Spencer, affords confirmatory evidence of the disorders on Sunday :

“ Monday morning, 5th June, 1780.

London seems at present to be totally taken up with this blue cockade mob. It remained in different numbers all day yesterday in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and at night I saw a great fire towards the City which I learnt was the burning of a Romish Chappel in Moorfields which they had set

¹ *London Evening Post*, 3rd-6th June.

fire to. They likewise were beginning to burn a private gentleman's house, being of that religion. The Guards are in parties quartered all over the town, but these associates declare they will destroy every Romish chappel. The Public seems much alarmed for the numbers on Friday were so greatly beyond all former and common mobs, and they are expected again to-morrow when their Petition is to be considered in the House of Commons. Hand-bills are stuck up everywhere to assemble them. A Special Commission is appointed to try the men they have taken, on Thursday. . . . These are the consequences of a weak government ; I mean these mobs, so long unattended to, for they are only transferred from Scotland. . . . On Tuesday some motions are to be made in the Commons against Lord George Gordon for his language on Friday, going to the Lobby which was full of his people telling them what each person said. And his threat of immediate destruction upon the least intimation from him to his friends without doors cannot pass without some notice. The Bishop of Lincoln was to the full as ill-treated as the papers say, and many of the Peers were obliged to make their escape by water from the House of Lords.

Lord Trentham was very sturdy with the mob : they broke into his chariot and had much conversation. At last, however, he got them to be civil to him. Lord Stormont they took twice round Palace Yard and made him swear against Popery. Everybody was treated roughly, and the pick-pockets took the utmost advantage of the occasion.

To-morrow the mob threatens arms, and if so, bloodshed is most likely to follow."

On Monday, the 5th, Strahan the King's printer made a personal complaint to Lord Mansfield of the maltreatment he had received on Friday, but the Chief Justice, with nerves shaken by his own rough handling, paid little heed. Strahan however scented trouble, and at once garrisoned his establishment in New Street, near Fetter Lane, where he maintained twenty men for a fortnight.

Monday was kept as the King's birthday, when persons of fashion resorted to the Court to offer his Majesty their congratulations. Previous to the Drawing-room the Privy Council deliberated on the situation. It appeared to them that the tumult was subsiding, deeming the promised reward of £500 for the apprehension of those guilty of desecrating the Sardinian and Bavarian chapels a sure check on the rabble. But the rabble had plans of their own. "Ce matin (Lundi) le peuple qui avait détruit la Chapelle Romaine pres de Moor Fields marchat dans les plus grandes Rues de la cité portant en triumphe le pupitre et divers matériaux qu'il avait extrait."¹ When the rabble reached the west end they paraded before Lord George Gordon's house in Welbeck Street, burning their load in the fields hard by.

"Les Palais de Kew, et le Château de Windsor furent garnis de double garde. Deux compagnies de Cavalrie passèrent dans ce dernier lieu."²

As doubts were entertained respecting the guilt of some of the prisoners committed at Bow Street on the preceding Saturday, orders were issued to bring them again to that Police Office—as hinted at in Lord Jersey's letter—to be re-examined respecting their participation in the arson at de Cordon's chapel. "On Monday," says the *London Chronicle*, 3rd-6th June, "were examined at Bow Street the young men taken up on Friday for a riot and a suspicion of wilfully setting fire to the Sardinian Ambassador's chapel in Duke Street, when they were all discharged

¹ *Tumulte*, p. 10.

² *Tumulte*, p. 12.

except Lind, Inwood, and Twycross, who are to be tried on Thursday next."

At the same time Bund, a blacksmith and a German, was examined. During the riot at Count Haslang's chapel he was observed by one Elizabeth Canning to be carrying several loads of furniture from the chapel. She followed him and saw him enter a house in Swallow Street. She informed the Count's servants. They went to Justice Hyde, who called on Mr. Miles the constable. On searching the premises several pieces of furniture belonging to the chapel were found in it. The property being sworn to by the Count's servants, and Mrs. Canning swearing to the identity of Bund, the parties were bound over to prosecute.

In the course of the re-examination it appeared that two or three of the prisoners were Catholics. Justice Wright observed that he feared none of the ringleaders were secured ; most of the young men having excellent characters, and having been at work all day. The three prisoners were escorted to Newgate about four o'clock in the afternoon by a detachment of the Foot-guards.

Lord Petre's letter of the 3rd was succeeded by a more urgent application :

“ Park Lane, 5th June, 1780.

I have just now received fresh information that my house is most undoubtedly to be attacked this evening. I am also assured that I am to undergo the same at Thornden near Brentwood, Essex, twenty miles from Whitechapel. I hope your Lordship will take some measures without loss of time to prevent these very alarming mischiefs.”

Soon after mid-day parties of rioters marched east-

wards. Some attacked and fired a Catholic chapel in Nightingale Street, without Aldgate. Others pushed on to Virginia Lane, Wapping, for the purpose of demolishing another Catholic Chapel.

“ Ils ont détruit les deux chapelles de la Cité avec l’habitation des prêtres qui se sauvèrent à la campagne excepté M.M. Copps et Hughes ; le premier qui n’a pas la seconde chemise est fort blessé, le second est en danger évident de sa vie.”¹

Some details have been preserved of the proceedings in Nightingale Street :

“ The Irishmen of Wapping did not intend to lose their chapel without a blow in its defence. They went to their priest and proposed to enrol themselves in a body to defend the remaining Catholic chapels. The priest went to the Secretary of State on Monday morning to suggest that this offer should be accepted, but the Minister discouraged the idea on the ground the soldiers would be able to suppress any further outbreak. Soldiers were, in fact, sent to Virginia Lane during the day, and the priests went about the Irish Catholics exhorting them to remain quiet, and not to interfere with the rioters if any attack was made. But when the mob arrived, the rioters entered the alley, in which the chapel was, from the opposite end, so that the first intimation that the soldiers in Virginia Lane had that the attack had begun was the sight of beds and other furniture being hurled from the windows of the priests’ house. Even then no orders were given, and the troops remained inactive while the rioters destroyed the chapel, pulled down one house and ruined another. One of the priests, the Rev. Michael Copps, was pursued by the rioters, and only saved his life by leaping across a wide ditch, over which the mob was unable to follow him.”²

It is inexplicable why the soldiers took no repressive measures, as they had marched from the Tower headed by Mr. Sherwood, a Justice sitting at the Public Office in Shadwell.³

¹ A.M.A.E.

² Burton, ii. 247.

³ p. 401, *infra*.

Another section again assembled in Ropemakers' Alley, Moorfields, and this time succeeded in making an onslaught on the school and three dwelling-houses belonging to Roman Catholics, destroying everything moveable and burning the very floors and joists. The dexterity and expedition with which stones and timbers were displaced indicated that some of the rioters were not unacquainted with the art of building. From Moorfields they hastened to Charles Square, Hoxton, where stood a Popish seminary which they demolished in like manner.¹

The King's views found the following expression :

“ Queen's House, 5th June, 1780.
44 m. pt. 11 a.m.

I think it right to acquaint Lord North that I have taken every step that could occur to me to prevent any tumult to-morrow, and have seen that proper executive orders have been sent by the two Secretaries of State. This tumult must be got the better of, or it will encourage designing men to use it as a precedent for assembling the people on other occasions ; if possible we must get to the bottom of it, and examples must be made. . . .”

The King's behests are reflected in a letter from Lord Stormont to the Secretary at War :

“ St. James's, 5th June, 1780.

We are commanded to signify to you His Majesty's Pleasure that the Military Force now stationed in the Tower be immediately augmented. That the several Guards be also immediately doubled and that a Battalion of Guards be held in readiness to turn out upon the Parade at Whitehall at the first moment.”

The acts of spoliation at Moorfields being reported at Court, further pressure was brought to bear on

¹ Charles Square, which had been rebuilt in 1771, remains in appearance much as it was in this troubled time.

the Lord Mayor in a letter signed jointly by Lord Stormont and Lord Hillsborough :

“ St. James’s, 5th June, 1780.

.... We have just received intelligence which gives us equal concern and surprize, that there is actually a riotious meeting at Moorfields, and that a great number of seditious persons are employed in demolishing different dwelling-houses, and all this is done in broad day without the least interposition of the civil magistrate.... To prevent or quell such outrages, and to seize and secure the principal delinquents, is an indispensable part of the duty of the high station in which your lordship is placed.”

To this the Lord Mayor answered :

“ Mansion House, 5th June, 1780.
3 qrs. past one o’clock.

My Lord—Before I received yours I had received information of a number of persons being assembled near Moor-fields. I have sent for a guard to the Tower, and I flatter myself that as magistrates are now attending to accompany them it will remove the complaint.”

During the day the following letter was despatched to Lord Stormont :

“ Lincoln’s Inn, 5th June, 1780.

In consequence of the leave your Lordship gave me yesterday I take the liberty to inform your Lordship that the riot in the city is beginning : that the House apparently most in danger is Mr. Langdale’s in Holborn ; he is an eminent distiller, and the stock-in-trade consisting of spirits is not less than £40,000. A party of men, not less than 50, was met half-an-hour ago ; they said they were going to Lord Petre’s ; and the general conversation at the ale-houses etc. is that they intend to-day to attack the private houses of the Roman Catholics.

I have the honour to be with the greatest respect etc.

CHARLES BUTLER.”

A few hours later a second letter from Mr. Butler arrived :

" Monday night.

My Lord—The mob have by this time pulled down the house of Mr. Rainsforth who is an active Justice of Peace. They now threaten Sir George Savile's, and to come to Mr. Dunning's chambers in Lincoln's Inn. They are 10,000 strong."

The Press had too officiously circulated the names of the witnesses against the thirteen persons committed at Bow Street,¹ and the mob thirsted for revenge. They assembled before the house of Mr. Rainsforth, tallow chandler to the King, in Clare Street (*v. Plate VIII.*), and after demolishing the windows laid the interior in ruins. Stocks of fats,² boxes of candles and other combustibles were carried into the street and set on fire. The roadway ran with melted tallow, and the atmosphere reeked with offensive fumes. Tardily the troops arrived, but they were insufficient in number and seemingly little disposed to intervene.

At about half-past ten another party collected before the house of the other witness, Mr. Maberly, a coach painter, in Little Queen Street. They attacked it from the street and at the back and it was soon levelled to the ground. It had recently been handsomely refronted.

About midnight an assault was made on Sir George Savile's residence in Leicester Square. Savile House stood on the west side of Leicester House, formerly a royal residence. Among the on-lookers was Thomas Thoroton, secretary to the

¹ At this period Police Offices were not open Courts.

² Butchers were then legally obliged to sell their surplus fats to tallow-chandlers. Clare Market teemed with butchers.

Duke of Rutland, who, knowing that the magistrates were in conclave in Gerrard Street, repaired thither in hot haste and warned them of a gathering that foreboded great danger. The Guards were soon on the scene and the wreckers were checked, but not till they had broken all the windows, torn up the whole range of iron railings, entered the residence and laid violent hands on some of the furniture, forcing one of Sir George's servants to bring them a candle to ignite it. The flames, as seen by the Burneys from Sir Isaac Newton's Observatory at No. 1 St. Martin's Street, illumined the whole Square. As night proceeded Savile House was garrisoned not only by Horse and Foot Guards, but also by Sir George's personal friends. These included Sir Walter Spencer Stanhope and Edmund Burke, both of whom had hastened to Sir George's assistance.

No sooner had Burke addressed himself to his self-appointed task than he received intelligence that when the destruction of Savile House was complete his own in Charles Street, St. James's Square, was to suffer a like fate. He instantly sought his home and set about selecting and removing his most important papers. While thus engaged he perceived sixteen soldiers enter and take possession. Apprised of the mob's ill-intention the Government had promptly afforded protection, and Burke was greatly touched by this signal mark of ministerial favour. Sir Joshua Reynolds, on hearing that Burke's house was threatened, himself set forward to render assistance.



X. The Environs of Leicester Fields, St. Martin's Street
and Litchfield Street, 1746

His own property being safe in military hands Burke returned to Savile House. The next morning, as he passed down St. Martin's Street, he was beset by a rabble that tried to extort from him a promise to vote for the repeal of the Act so obnoxious to Protestants. Mrs. Burney, who observed the incident from Newton House, heard Burke exclaim to those pestering him, "I beseech you, gentlemen; gentlemen, I beg—" But so clamorous were they that Burke was obliged to draw his sword before he could rid himself of their attentions.

Henry Fanshawe, lieutenant of the First Guards, furnished the following intelligence to Colonel Hyde :

"In consequence of an order from Genl. Ld. Amherst, I am to report to you that on Monday night the 5th having been before at St. Geo. Saville's house under the command of Lt. Col. Lake, I was detached from thence with 30 men to Clare Market, attended by Justice Addington. On the way I met with Ensign Grimstone of the 3rd Regiment with a party of 40 men who likewise proceeded under my command, and soon after a party of Horse Guards. On our arrival there I found the house of a Mr. Rainsforth pillaged by the populace, and the furniture and stock laid in several heaps in the street and burning very fiercely. I left Ensign Grimstone with a party of 30 men at the end of the street leading to the fires to support me in case of necessity. I ordered the Horse Guards to take a circuit round and come down Clare Market whilst I advanced straight to it, which was done and the streets pretty well cleared. Several engines were there but no water, and when afterwards there was any the populace would not suffer the engines to play, *in which the inhabitants of the houses endangered by the fire concurred*. Mr. Addington then addressed the mob, and at length prevailed on them to suffer the engines to play, after which the fires were soon extinguished. As I saw I was *not* intended to act there my chief care was to hinder the pipes of the engines from being cut, which was apprehended and in which I succeeded. I then

returned to the Mews¹ with my party leaving a sergeant and 12 men.”²

The Association, now realising that the best laid schemes of Protestants, no less than those of mice, ‘gang aft aglee,’ thought to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of well ordered citizens by posing as the injured party ; they accordingly issued, by their President, the following public notice :

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION.

Whereas many Riotous Persons on Friday last, when the Petition of this Association was presented to the House of Commons did tumultuously impede the Passage to both Houses of Parliament, and grossly insulted the persons of many of the Members, and afterwards proceeded with violence to destroy the Chapels belonging to Foreign Ambassadors (so sacred in all countries) to the great breach of the Peace, the Disturbance of private Persons and Families, and to the disgrace of the best of causes.

Resolved unanimously, That all true Protestants be requested to shew their attachment to their best interest by a legal and peaceable Deportment, as all unconstitutional proceedings, in so good a cause, can only tend to prevent the Members of the Legislature from paying due attention to the United Prayers of the Protestant Petition.

By Order of the Committee,

G. GORDON, President.

London, 5th June, 1780.

In the meanwhile what had happened to Mr. Malo ? After repeated fruitless applications

“at a late hour on Monday evening Mr. Malo went for the last time to the Lord Mayor. He represented to his lordship his dangerous situation, entreated in the strongest terms his protection and begged his lordship to permit him to bring his wife and daughters to his house. His lordship was as little moved with these as with any of the former

¹ The King’s Mews where Trafalgar Square now stands.

² *Amherst Papers*, ciii. folio 8. The underlinings occur in the original.

applications. He did not condescend to give Mr. Malo any answer, but turned his heel, and went to an inner room. He soon after returned and said ‘Surely, sir, you are a Papist?’ Mr. Malo said he was of the religion in which he was educated, the Roman Catholic faith. ‘I always thought so,’ replied his lordship and retired.”

Illuminating sidelights on events preceding and enacted during the disturbances, emerge from the diary of Mr. William Mawhood, a Catholic by faith and a prosperous woollen merchant and army clothier by trade. His home and place of business were in West Smithfield, where he occupied the exquisite half-timbered house over-arching the approach to St. Bartholomew the Great, an artistic gem which the reader, if he be so minded, may still with pleasure survey. Mawhood, as became a well-to-do trader, owned a villa at Finchley, whither, it being midsummer, he frequently drove out to sleep. Mr. Mawhood also possessed a wife, a son Charles, and a daughter Dorothy, a young lady, to judge by a still existing miniature, of considerable charm.¹ The following entries are illustrative of the additional worries and harassments borne by Catholic families who, barely escaping without physical losses, remained unnoticed by the public press :

30 Aug. 1779. Mr. Bolton advised me to find out if Lord Petre was going to raise a regiment of Catholics.

23 Sept. 1779. Charles Butler advises me to have always £200 by me. Does not like the times by any means.

25 Jan. 1780. Mr. Hamilton Sandes says Lord George is a fool and a madman, that the Association will come to nothing in the end.

2 June 1780. Burned Lincoln's Inn Fields Chapel, Warwick Street Chapel and 20 of the rabble behaved very

¹ Reproduced Burton, ii. 254.

ill at my door. Took refuge in Mr. Davitt's house until they were gone.

3 June. Mr. Bolton called on me this morning that Bishop Challoner might come to Finchley. Called on the Bishop. I offered him my house which he accepted. He came in the afternoon in Lady Stanton's chariot.

4 June (Sunday). The Bishop said etc. [i.e. Mass].

5 June. Set off from Finchley for Town at 6.30 a.m. At 7 o'clock received an express from son Charles that it was strongly reported my house [in Smithfield] would be fired by Lord G. Gordon's Blue Cockade Banditti. On receiving express [returned and] consulted the Bishop who advised I should not go to Town, but on my representing to him that my all was at stake he permitted me . . . I and Mrs. Mawhood set off for London. Call'd at Mrs. Hanne's [Gloucester Street, Queen Square] for the Bishop. Found the house shut, knocked several times, no body at home. Call'd then on . . . , all gone away and moved their goods. Arrived at Lord G. Germain's Office for assistance, but neither Lord Germain nor Mr. De Gray there. The messenger advised me to go to the War Office ; went there, neither Mr. Jenkinson nor Lewis there. See a clerk at almost the top of the house, but he said no assistance could be given me unless signed by a Justice of the Peace, but that in case of distress I must send to the Tower or Savoy. Found it difficult getting through the streets being the King's birthday. Came home with Mr. Atkins who expected Maberley's house would be that night levelled for his assistance at the Sardinian ambassador. All in the utmost fears ; advised to quit the house. Got a guard and arrived at Finchley, Mrs. Mawhood and self, at 11. Every one robbed on the road but ourselves.

III

TUESDAY, 6TH JUNE

“ When the rude rabble’s watchword was—destroy,
And blazing London seem’d a second Troy.”

COWPER’S *Table Talk*, 1781.

WITH the disturbances increasing rather than diminishing the prospects of the next day’s sitting of Parliament were darkened. Lord Stormont wrote to the Secretary at War :

“ St. James’s, 5th June, 1780. Midnight.

As the outrages committed this night in different quarters of the Town shew that a large military force will be necessary . . . I have it in command from his Majesty to signify to you his Pleasure that you do immediately take every necessary measure to that end.”

Within an hour Lord Stormont addressed an urgent letter to Lord Amherst, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces¹ :

“ St. James’s, 5th June, 1780.

40 m. past twelve p.m.²

My Lord—Some of the Civil Magistrates who have just been with us here, give it as their clear opinion that it will be impracticable to keep the Publick Peace unless there is a very considerable Body of Horse which they can call in to their assistance. They find that assistance much more

¹ Amherst’s title, by the terms of his Commission, was, in fact, “ General-on-the-Staff,” a position he held from 1778 to 1782.

² A slight slip for “ June 6, 1780 : 40 m. past twelve a.m.”

effectual than any that can be given by the Foot Guards. After this declaration on their part, after all the outrages that have been committed this night, we are persuaded that your Lordship will think too much attention cannot be paid to this opinion.

Justice Addington is this moment come in and reports that he left near five thousand men in Clare Market pulling down the house of Mr. Rainsforth formerly High Constable. Mr. Addington sent for a detachment of Horse Guards, but there are none to be spared. As that is so absolutely necessary for quelling this Riot and stopping an Evil that gains ground every moment, we make no doubt that your Lordship will think it necessary to give immediate orders for the Light Horse in Southwark to come instantly to Town. We cannot take his Majesty's Pleasure at this hour of the night, but it is not to be doubted that his Majesty will approve a step which the present exigency so loudly calls for."

Lord Amherst, the recipient of this letter, was military adviser to the Government in the conduct of the operations against America, and he was requested to undertake, in addition, the suppression of the present intestine disturbances. As Governor of Virginia he had been a favourite officer of the elder Pitt. He is linked with Hawke as exemplars of bravery in Goldsmith's *Good-Natured Man*, Act III. 1768. Amherst answered promptly :

" Whitehall, Tuesday morning. 2 o'clock.

I fear the Troops in Southwark cannot be assembled at this time of night to assist the Civil Magistrates so soon as assistance may be sent from Whitehall . . . This purpose will be best answered by the Troops [? at the Tower] marching to Whitehall, and there wait for Orders. I have ordered them accordingly, but your Lordship will see that this takes away a part of what the Lord Mayor may expect to send for, and to have."

Lord Amherst nevertheless made an effort to comply with Lord Stormont's wishes :



XI. JEFFREY, FIRST BARON AMHERST

" To the officer commanding the Troops at Lambeth and Troops at Southwark.

Whitehall. Tuesday morning. 2 o'clock.

Sir : I have this moment a letter from the Secretary of State acquainting me of the necessity of the Light Dragoons coming as soon as possible to assist the civil magistrate in the execution of their duty against the Rioters in Clare Market and other parts of the Town. You will therefore assemble such men as you can and follow the directions of the civil magistrate." ¹

Five hours later Lord Amherst wrote to Lord Hillsborough, advising him that four troops of Light Dragoons had that morning reached town, that two of them had immediately marched to Clare Market, where they had established a state of quiet, but that they were unable to get any Justice of the Peace to give their orders.

The Secretary at War despatched betimes a letter to Lord Stormont acknowledging the due receipt of his Majesty's commands contained in the letter with which this chapter opens. As certain views expressed by the Secretary will require consideration at a later stage of this narrative, the document is set out at some length :

" War Office, 6th June, 1780.

My Lord.—In the course of last night I was honoured with your Lordship's letter dated the 5th at midnight. Before the receipt of this every possible order had been given for the troops to be in readiness, and a very large Military Force has continued assembled through the whole of yesterday and last night ready to assist the Civil Magistrates at their requisition in preserving the Public Peace. . . . I have further to acquaint your Lordship that I have with Lord Amherst's concurrence sent a special messenger with an order for a Regiment of Dragoons to march without delay from Canterbury to the neighbourhood of London.

¹ *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 34.

I have now the honour to enclose to your Lordship the copy of a letter and report transmitted to me by Major-General Wynyard of what happened in the course of yesterday and last night, and must beg in the most serious manner to call your Lordship's attention to some parts of that letter and report wherein it appears that in one instance the Civil Magistrate having called for the Troops was not ready to attend them ; that in another instance the Troops having been called out were left by the Magistrate exposed to the fury of the Populace when the Party were insulted in a most extraordinary manner, and that in two other instances after the Troops had marched to the places appointed for them, several of the Magistrates refused to act. It is the duty of the Troops, my Lord, to act only under the Authority and by direction, of the Civil Magistrate. For this reason they are under greater restraints than any other of His Majesty's subjects, and when insulted are obliged to be more cautious even in defending themselves. If, therefore, the Civil Magistrate after having called upon them is not ready to attend them, or abandons them before they return to their quarters, or after they arrive at the places to which they have been ordered, refuses to act, I leave it to your Lordship to judge in how defenceless and how disgraceful a situation the military are left, and how much such conduct as this tends even to encourage Riots, and how much the public service as well as the Troops must suffer by it.

I am forced to urge this the more strongly as what I have now laid before your Lordship are not the first instances that have come to my knowledge of conduct of the like kind in the Civil Magistrates.

I have the honour to be, etc.

C. JENKINSON.¹

This letter—and the enclosures which are not here reproduced—were immediately acknowledged :

“ St. James's, 6th June, 1780.

Mr. Secretary at War, Sir,—I have this moment received the honour of your letter. I see in its fullest extent the mischief that must arise from such conduct in the Civil Magistrates, and have written in the strongest terms to the different offices.

STORMONT.”

¹ P.R.O. Charles Jenkinson became First Earl of Liverpool in 1796.

The *Amherst Papers* disclose for the first time that the Government in directing the troops, in a civil commotion, to act only under the supervision of a magistrate were accepting the opinion of Philip Yorke, when Attorney-General, on an occasion of serious rioting among Sussex smugglers nearly half-a-century earlier. The concluding paragraph of Yorke's opinion, a copy of which was provided for Lord Amherst's use, runs :

“ Lincoln's Inn, Jany. 2nd, 1732.

... Upon consideration of the whole matter I entirely concur in opinion with my Lord Raymont in his report that the Officers of the Troops and the soldiers should be directed not to interpose at all in any of these cases but at such times as they shall be desired by the Civil Magistrate.”

Yorke here refers to an opinion of Lord Raymont when advising on the proper measures for suppressing the alarming Taunton riots of 1721. In the middle of the century, however, Sir John Willes and Sir Dudley Ryder, in a joint opinion, on the occasion of a tumult, had differed from Lord Raymont and from Sir Philip Yorke, considering that necessity for military action was a question for officers to determine. But as Yorke (afterwards Lord Hardwicke) became so celebrated a lawyer, the Government probably thought his opinion the better guide to follow.

Later in the day intelligence was brought to Lord Stormont, the nature of which he likewise communicated to the War Office :

“ St. James's, 6th June, 1780.

I have received information which gives me reason to apprehend that the houses hereafter enumerated are threatened with great danger this night :—

Those of the following Foreign Ministers :

Count Belgioroso, Imperial Minister, Portman Square.

Count Haslang, Bavarian Minister, Golden Square.

Mons. de Simolin, Russian Minister, Hanover Square, with his chapel in Clifford St., the corner of Old Burlington St.

The Chev. de Pinto, Portuguese Minister, South Audley St.

Count Pignatelli, Sicilian Minister, Lower Brooke St.

Marquis de Cordon, Sardinian Minister, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Mons. Cavalli, Venetian Resident, Soho Square.

Mons. D'Agens, Genoese Minister, Green Street.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Palace at Lambeth ; the houses of the Archbishop of York and Lord Mansfield, Bloomsbury Square ; Apsley House, Piccadilly ; Lord Rockingham's, Grosvenor Square ; Lord Petre's, Park Lane ; Mr. Lascelles, Portman Square ; Mr. Burke's, Charles Street, St. James's ; Mr. Dunning's Chambers, Lincoln's Inn Fields [*sic*] ; Freemason's Hall, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields ; and Mr. Cox's who lives opposite.

There is also reason to suspect that the houses of Lord North, and his Majesty's other Ministers may be threatened.

I am persuaded that you will think it necessary that proper numbers of the Guards should be so distributed in different quarters of the Town as to afford the civil magistrate the most immediate assistance."

Lord Stormont's fears for the Primate's Palace were well founded. Those acquainted with the Albert Embankment are familiar with the ancient archiepiscopal palace of Lambeth, with its incongruity of architecture and its cleanly surroundings. But in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the palace lay amid a labyrinth of squalid courts and alleys which afforded privilege of sanctuary to insolvent debtors who emerged from their retreat only on Sundays when they were immune from arrest. Hither on the morning of Tuesday came a party of

over 500 rioters, sounding drums and fifes, flaunting colours and vociferating "No Popery." Finding the palace gates shut they repeatedly knocked ; as no answer was vouchsafed they bawled out their intention of returning in the evening, and proceeded to fill up the intervening time by parading round and round the palace. Those within made immediate application to the Secretary at War for military protection. At two o'clock Guards, one hundred strong, under the command of Colonel Deacon, arrived ; sentinels were at once placed on the towers and at the avenues of the palace. With great difficulty the Archbishop, Frederick Cornwallis, was prevailed on to quit. The mob continued to hug the walls for several days, but the presence of the military contingent checked their ferocity. It has always been thought that the palace narrowly escaped destruction, and soldiers, increased to 150, were quartered within it till August.

"Yesterday (Tuesday) morning," said the *London Chronicle*, "General Vernon received orders to attend strictly to duty, and not to leave the Tower garrison till further orders. This is the first instance of a Lieutenant Governor of the Tower being put upon duty since the Rebellion of 1745."

At 12.50 p.m. Lord Stormont issued a further order :

" St. James's, 6th June, 1780.

Gold Stick in Waiting : My Lord—I am commanded to signify His Majesty's pleasure that you do give immediate orders to the proper officers under your command to parade the troops under their command and to hold themselves in readiness to march to the assistance of the Civil Power when they shall be called upon."

During the morning two inflammatory hand-bills

were assiduously distributed in London, especially in Fleet Street :

(1) TRUE PROTESTANTS NO TURNCOATS

Or, six plain reasons why Protestants of all Denominations should oppose the Growth and Establishment of Popery with the greatest vigour and without delay ; earnestly addressed to every man in his senses.

1. One of the principal tenets of Popery is to destroy all Heretics off the face of the Earth.
2. Papists are taught to believe every one a Heretic who does not belong to the Church of Rome.
3. The doctrines of Popery are inconsistent with reason ; witness the doctrine of transubstantiation.
4. Popery encourages persecution and countenances murder ; witness the Martyrs in bloody Q. Mary's reign, and the inquisition in Spain and Portugal in the present day.
5. Popery allows pardons for sins past, present and to come to be bought, so that any one may commit the greatest crimes if he does but pay the Popish Priest a few guineas for his absolution.
6. Popery leads to the grossest idolatry, as it enjoins the worshipping of angels, relics, etc., and the adoration of the Host.

(2) ENGLAND IN BLOOD

On Thursday morning the 8th inst. at nine o'clock will be published, price only three pence, by C. Thompson, No. 159 Fleet Street, THE THUNDERER, addressed to Lord George Gordon and the glorious Protestant Association ; shewing the necessity of their persevering against the infernal designs of the Ministry to overturn the religious and civil liberties of this country in order to introduce Popery and Slavery. In this paper will be given a full account of the bloody tyrannies and inhuman butcheries exercised on the Protestants in England by the See of Rome ; highly necessary to be read at this important moment by every Englishman who loves his God and his Country. To which will be added some reasons why the few misguided people now in confinement for destroying the Romish Chapels should not suffer, and the dreadful consequences of an attempt to bring them to punishment.

Whilst dissension was being stirred up in Fleet Street and Westminster, what was going forward in Moorfields ?

" On Tuesday morning Mr. Malo removed some of his valuable stock of silks, but the utensils of his trade and the furniture of his house he had not time to shift. At noon several large bands of rioters came to his house, from different avenues about Moorfields, at almost the same time, assembling at back and front. They knocked and threatened to murder the people inside if the door was not opened immediately. Two of Mr. Malo's servants made their escape over the leads of the house. Mr. Malo his wife and daughters fled, but the eldest son fainted the instant the mob rushed into the house and was for many days so affected that both his life and his intellects were in danger. The mob demolished everything in the house ; they tore down the wainscot, broke all the furniture, threw it out of the window and made a bonfire of it. Among the things they heaped on the bonfire were some canary birds with their cages. Passers by wished to deliver them from their fate and offered to purchase them, but the mob said they were Popish birds and should burn with the rest of the Popish goods. Some of the birds were rescued, but the rest were kept screaming on the fire until they were consumed."

From the Arsenal Lord Amherst received the following trenchant letter :

" Woolwich, 6th June, 1780.

I have now emparked in the front of the new Barracks twelve Battalion Guns with 50 rounds of case shot, and 10 of round for each gun. The officers and men are likewise posted, and for those who are not I have ordered 50 rounds of ball cartridge for each, so that should these riotous Rascalls chuse to come here or oblige us to come to them, we are prepared at a minute's warning. I have only to add, supposing this to be the case, I must insist on having the direction of this little command without regard to rank.—
WM. BELFORD."¹

¹ *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 30.

General Belford (1709-1780) succeeded the celebrated Albert Borgard as Colonel Commandant at Woolwich in 1751. He later included within his command the charge of the Warren, the name by which the Arsenal was then known. The *Gentleman's Magazine* 1780 (p. 347) contained this handsome tribute to the distinguished artillery officer :

"During the Gordon Riots, the mob, under the pretence of religion, did all in their power to ruin the country, by trying to lay its capital in ashes, and trying to burn the Warren. But General Belford had made such disposition that 40,000 men could not have forced the Arsenal. This important service, and the despatching trains of artillery to the different camps, kept him on horse back day and night. Such extraordinary fatigue, such unremitting application burst a blood-vessel, and brought on a fever which carried him off on 1st July. For deep knowledge of his profession, and great intrepidity of mind he had no superior."

To return to Westminster. By two o'clock multitudes wearing blue cockades had gathered at St. Stephens. They flocked in without preliminary muster at St. George's Fields, a detachment of Light Dragoons having marched from Mitcham the previous afternoon into Kennington and Newington to be in readiness to disperse any unlawful assemblies that might there congregate.¹ At an early stage Guards, both Foot and Horse, formed an avenue for members to pass to the House. The mob were not intimidated, but paraded the streets with colours, music, cutlasses, poleaxes and bludgeons.² They

¹ According to the *Gazetteer* of 7th June. Yet a note was received at the War Office at one o'clock from Mr. Robinson, Lord North's secretary, "that 50,000 men or more were marching from St. George's Fields towards Westminster." *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 23.

² *London Courant*, 6th-8th June.

made a determined attempt to force their way through the Park to the Queen's House, but their progress was arrested by a strong party of the Guards acting under Captain Topham, who made it known he would wait for no magistrate's order to fire. The Lords were suffered to proceed without personal violence, though reviled with hisses and reproaches, until the arrival at 3.30 of Lord Sandwich, who had abstained from appearing on the previous Friday. Lord Sandwich's chariot was stopped at the corner of Bridge Street and Parliament Street at a point where no soldiers were drawn up, and the chariot doors were instantly wrenched open. Three light horsemen with Colonel Smith hastened to his relief, but the utmost they could effect was to enable the vehicle to turn round. The coachman started rapidly back for the Admiralty, but the more daring rioters seized the horses' bridles and again brought the chariot to a stand. George Crabbe, "Nature's sternest poet yet the best," saw that Sandwich's face was cut, and Romilly expected to see him torn to pieces. But the First Lord of the Admiralty leapt from his coach and darted into a coffee-house. Guards, under orders from Justice Hyde, instantly rode up and held the mob at bay :¹

"Captain Topham being ordered to charge at the head of a detachment of cavalry" says Reynolds, the future dramatist. "I had an opportunity of observing a very curious effect. The crowd were wedged into such firm and compact masses

¹ Another account runs : "Lord Sandwich a été attaqué aujourd'hui dans sa carrose comme il allait au Parliament, renversé dans sa voiture, on le traina dans la boue, le trempa sous pied et le déchira en lui disant qu'il aurait dû empêcher l'exercice des papistes dans les prisons ; on le sauva avec bien de la peine dans un café." A.M.A.E.

that the cavalry were actually compelled to recede and return at a gallop to give their career sufficient force to penetrate them. The consequence was that after the cavalry had passed through them, the mob lay in the most ludicrous manner one over another, like a pack of cards ; and the only accident of which I heard was the fracture of a leg."

Soon after three o'clock all the Members had entered the House. As Crabbe walked back to his lodgings near the Royal Exchange, he met "a resolute band of vile-looking fellows, ragged, dirty and insolent, armed with clubs going to join their companions." He later learnt that eight or ten of such bodies existed in different parts of the city.

The Earl of Jersey again kept Countess Spencer informed of developments :

" 6th June, 1780.

" It is in vain to attempt to describe the state of this unhappy town this day ; mobs parading in triumph in different parties thro' all the streets, threatening the houses and lives of those who they have understood to be the most earnest in passing the Bill, and the Guards (Horse, Foot and Light Horse) sent in pursuit of them without any effect. They are got to such a pitch of confidence that I cannot conceive any way of bloodshed being avoided to-night, if the decision of the House of Commons displeases them ; and the total repeal of the Bill is their demand. These three days they have spent in pulling down houses, chappels, and papist schools, the magistrates standing by, even the Lord Mayor, and not ordering the soldiers to act. The language too of the attending spectators is symptomatic of the most serious events. Last night they pulled down Sir G. Savile's house,¹ to-day they have been at Lambeth without doing any mischief, but declaring firmly that unless the Bill is repealed that House shall not be standing to-morrow. Lord Rockingham, Lord Petre and Lord North are seriously threatened. They have attempted to get to the Queen's Palace but were stopped by the Guards with bayonets presented. Lord George some say is gone away,

¹ The mob had been checked in its attempt to do so.

but that will not check this. I shall write another letter by the post to-night, if I can in time. The next few hours may be very important to the whole of this country. Burke's life is threatened in the most open and determined manner."

The Commons, which despite intimidation were 220 strong, did not deliberate on the Petition. Deeming the outrages to demand immediate attention the Members passed the following resolutions :

"That it is a gross breach of privilege of this House for any person to obstruct and insult the Members and to endeavour to compel the Members by force to declare themselves in favour of or against any Proposition then depending.

That the taking possession of the Lobby and the avenues to this House on Friday last and maintaining the same to the great obstruction of the business of this House was a high violation of the Privilege of this House and a gross and notorious insult on the Dignity and Constitution of Parliament.

That an humble address be presented to his Majesty that he will be pleased to give directions to the Attorney-General to prosecute all such persons as shall be found to have been the instigators or abettors of, or active in promoting the Riots and Tumults that were on Friday last in Old Palace Yard, and the avenues to this House, and that were concerned in any of the Outrages committed upon the Houses and Chapels of the Ministers from Foreign States, or in any Outrages against the Property and Houses of any of His Majesty's subjects.

That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty. That he will be graciously pleased to give immediate directions that an enquiry be made into the Amount of the Damages occasioned by the Outrages committed upon the Houses and Chapels of any of the Ministers from Foreign States ; and that He will be graciously pleased to order satisfaction and recompense to be made ; and to assure his Majesty that this House will make good the expense that shall be incurred on that account.

That this House will, as soon as the Tumults subside that are now subsisting, proceed immediately to the due consideration of the several Petitions from many of His Majesty's Protestant subjects."

The House adjourned till Thursday morning.
Deferential as these resolutions were they did not meet with His Majesty's entire approval :

“ Queen’s House, 6th June, 1780,
25 min. past 9 p.m.

Lord North cannot be much surprised at my not thinking the House of Commons have this day advanced so far in the present business as the exigency of the times requires ; the allowing Lord Geo. Gordon, the avowed head of the tumult, to be at large certainly encourages the continuation of it ; to which is to be added the great supineness of the civil magistrates ; and I fear without more vigour that this will not subside ; indeed unless exemplary punishment is procured it will remain a lasting disgrace, and will be precedent for future commotion.”

By five o’clock it became imperative for Justice Hyde to attempt to awe the rioters in Palace Yard by reading the proclamation contained in the Riot Act. This done he ordered the Horse to ride amongst the mob to disperse it. Thereupon James Jackson (described later as “ a very desperate fellow ”)¹ hoisted a black and red flag and shouted “ To Hyde’s house a-hoy.” The yelling rabble then surged up Parliament Street, and hastened to Leicester Fields, arriving shortly before seven. They rapidly streamed into St. Martin’s Street (*v. Plate X.*), which was soon “ as crowded as the city is on Lord Mayor’s day.” At the southern end of the street stood Justice Hyde’s town house—their objective. Once within his portal the entire furniture was shot from windows and doorway in quantity so large as to require six bonfires for its consumption ; these were disposed from the end of

¹ Howell, vol. xxi. p. 539.

St. Martin's Street to the crossing between Orange and Blue Cross Streets. It was noticeable that the rioters brought fire-engines with them, which they played, during the ransacking and burning of Hyde's house, on the neighbouring houses to prevent their taking fire. Whilst the destruction was proceeding some thirty Foot Guards led by an Ensign marched into the street. The populace hailed them with loud huzzas. The Ensign delivered himself of a speech demanding them to desist from their unlawful acts. His oratory was received with jeers. Perceiving the futility of his efforts he turned his men about and led them back whence they came, whilst the mob, shouting and clapping the soldiers on the back as they passed, returned to their work of demolition. Not removables only, but shutters, doors and window-frames were hurled into the street. Planking and joists were uprooted and drawn into the Square to feed a stack more fierce than any raging in St. Martin's Street. Till two o'clock the next morning did the mob roar and riot around the flames of their fires and the window illuminations of the surrounding inhabitants, whom they forced to participate in their victory over law and order. While Dr. Burney with his daughters Susan and Hetty stood at an upper window of Newton House, at the north-east corner of St. Martin's Street, watching the crowd, they observed a group of men and women looking towards them. "No Popery," cried those below. The Burneys failed to appreciate that they themselves were referred to until one of the group, pointing upwards, called to his companions "They are all

three papists ! ” “ For God’s sake,” cried Hetty, “ call out ‘ No Popery,’ or anything.” Dr. Burney ran for his hat and huzza’d from the window. “ God bless your Honour,” returned the group, who passed on well satisfied.

Later at night Susan Burney mounted to Sir Isaac Newton’s former observatory, and was there afforded such a panoramic view “ as I shall never think of but with horror. Our Square was as light as day by the bonfire from the contents of Justice Hyde’s house, which received fresh fuel every moment ; on the other side we saw flames ascending from Newgate, a fire in Covent Garden which proved to be Justice Fielding’s house, and another in Bloomsbury Square which was at Lord Mansfield’s.”¹

Abraham Raimbach, the engraver, lived with his parents at Cecil Court, St. Martin’s Lane. Though of tender years he nevertheless recollects “ being awakened in the dead of night by a violent uproar, occasioned by the smashing of our windows and the yells of an infuriated mob rushing through the streets, calling upon the sleeping inhabitants to light up their rooms. The call was obeyed by my father as promptly as possible, though with considerable danger to himself from the stones that were thrown.”

Though the orgy in the Fields lasted many hours the original wreckers had long since departed, leaving others to quicken the bonfires. The demolition of Hyde’s house was effected by eight o’clock, when James Jackson hastened up and down St. Martin’s

¹ *The House in St. Martin’s Street.* By C. Hill, 1907, p. 259.

Street, his black and red flag again in hand, rallying with "A-hoy for Newgate." The insurgents with a sense of new-felt power quickly followed. They sped with torch and crowbar through Long Acre, Great Queen Street and Holborn to the Old Bailey. Suddenly William Blake, the poet-artist, then aged twenty-three, encountered the advancing wave of triumphant blackguardism, and, unable to disentangle himself was speedily engulfed and forced to witness from the forefront the attack on the fortress-like prison.

"Mardi à 9 heures du soir : ô tempora ô mores, en passant par la ville je viens de rencontrer un corps considérable au moins de 20,000 à pied et à cheval, les uns avec des drapeaux des 13 provinces, les autres avec des étendards noirs ; les chevaux légers, les grenadiers à cheval ainsi que plusieurs régiments d'infanterie viennent à notre secours. S'ils font leur devoir, ce dont on doute, nous pourrons respirer, mais les nerfs du gouvernement paraissent relâchés dans toutes leurs parties et l'on dit qu'il y a au moins 200,000 prêts à commettre toute sorte de désordre cette nuit. Il y a un corps considérable devant l'hôtel de Lord Petre's depuis 6 heures, mais il n'ose le molester à cause qu'il y a un parti des gardes en dedans."¹

At ten o'clock Lord Amherst wrote to Lord Stormont :

"I am much distressed at receiving an account of your Lordship's house [in Portland Place] being attacked, and immediately dispatched a party for the protection of it. The officer commanding it has assured me everything is perfectly quiet."

Detaching ourselves for a short time from the ruffians who are hastening to Newgate, let us follow in the wake of the rioters who sought out the Police Office of Sir John Fielding in Bow Street,

¹ A.M.A.E.

whence the four prisoners had been committed. When a sailor, William Lawrence, was subsequently indicted, for participating in this outrage, M'Manus, one of Fielding's constables, gave a short account of the opening scenes :

"I was ordered by Mr. Bond [Sir John Fielding's clerk] to remain in Sir John's house with two other constables while he went to fetch the military to prevent the house being pulled down. I stayed in the house near three hours. I saw a great crowd of people ; they filled all Bow Street and all the streets leading to it ; some of them had clubs, others sticks, iron bars and choppers. I saw in particular the prisoner Lawrence. I saw him constantly close to the door. Suddenly there was a cry 'Newgate, Newgate, Newgate,' when many of the people went away. I spoke to Lawrence out of the window. I told him to go about his business. A considerable time later the street began to fill again, and we noticed that some who had been in Bow Street before had returned.

Q. What time was it when the mob returned ?

A. A little after 9 or it may be more.

Q. What was their behaviour ?

A. Numbers who had clubs in their hands came to the door and said 'Damn you ! we will have it down presently.' Then Prothero [another constable] and I put up the chain to the door and made it as secure as we could. We then all three got out the back way. I went home and got my pistols and cutlass and put on my great coat and came back to Bow Street. It was nearly ten o'clock. The windows were all broken, the wainscoting torn down and many fires alight in the street where the furniture was burning."

M'Manus went on to describe the demolition of the front of the house to the first floor, the consternation of the neighbours, the plying of the incendiaries with drink by the landlord of the "Brown Bear" opposite, who was fearful for the safety of his tavern. Among the movables burnt were the manuscripts of Henry Fielding, whose son William watched the

conflagration. The orgy continued till three the next morning. Sir John was at his private house in Brompton.

True to his promise Lord Jersey wrote to Countess Spencer before night-fall :

“ Tuesday night, 9 o’clock, 6th June, 1780.

The House is up, and all they have done is to appoint a Committee to examine into the affair, and to address the Crown to prosecute the rioters.

Lord G. Gordon agreed to all the propositions and by all accounts seemed in great trepidation and when he went out told the mob they would be satisfied. They took off his horses, etc. Riots are now beginning again in all parts. They have burnt a Justice’s house down, and are at this moment attacking Lord G. Germain’s. A large body is gone to pull down Newgate, and they still say Lord Rockingham’s, Mr. Turner’s and Lord Petre’s are to be demolished.

The soldiers do nothing ; cannot fly from place to place, nor are there enough to satisfy the demands of the poor sufferers. Government do not, nor can protect us ; you shall hear more to-morrow. It is nothing but consternation everywhere.”

Langdale’s distilleries in Holborn, whose threatened attack Charles Butler had reported to Lord Stormont, still gave cause for anxiety. A friend of Langdale, Mr. P. Metcalfe, pursued the subject with one of Lord Stormont’s secretaries :

“ 6th June, 1780.

William Fraser, Esq.—Dear Sir : Mr. Langdale in whose behalf is enclosed a letter to Lord Stormont is the gentleman I yesterday mentioned to you whose property seems much threatened. He has upwards of 350 tons [*sic*] of spirits in the Distillery worth near £28,000. The property exposed cannot be less than £40,000. He does not wish any measures for his security which might invite the mob, but humbly hopes his case may deserve a provisional attention should he see sufficient danger to send for relief.”

Attention was paid to the request, as the *Amherst Papers* contains the following report¹ : " I was ordered on Tuesday night to cover with twenty Dragoons the entrance of forty foot guards into the house of Mr. Langdale, the distiller on Holborn Hill. David Howell, Lieut. Queen's Lt. Dragoons."

Meanwhile matters passing strange were enacted in the City. On reaching Newgate the rioters were joined by parties already congregating in the Old Bailey. It was openly stated that their purpose was to release the four prisoners committed, on re-examination at Bow Street, the previous afternoon. Henry Angelo had been attracted to the scene by hearing such intention avowed in the streets :

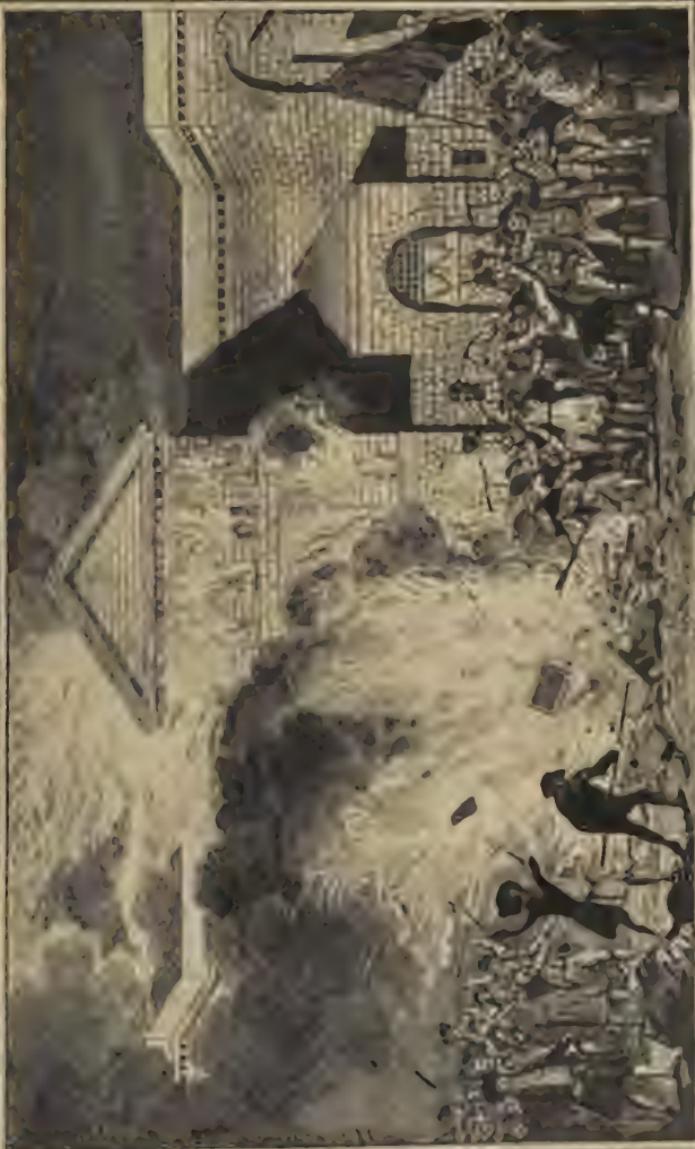
" Our family dined with Albany Wallis in Norfolk Street.² The party there were the Linley family, R. B. Sheridan, Parson Bate and Tickle. After dinner I tried to make my way to Parliament Street, curious to know what was going on. When I got facing the Admiralty many people were approaching towards me : " They are going to Newgate " was the general buzz. I ran directly back to tell what I had heard, when they all laughed, and no one would believe me. However away I ran to Newgate."

The prison was a new structure which had cost £45,000, and, begun in 1770, was not entirely out of the contractor's hands. It was a large, strong and artistic building mainly of stone, designed by George Dance, Jun., city architect. It comprised two great wings, between which stood the keeper's house (built largely of brick) and the chapel ; attached to the wings were the cells. The succeeding scenes

¹ Vol. ciii. f. 31.

² Albany Wallis had been Garrick's solicitor : he was to be Gordon's in the proceedings for High Treason. See an article " Garrick and his Friends " by the present writer in *N. and Q.*, 14th Oct, 1916.

The Rioters in Newgate.



have been vividly drawn by T. Holcroft, by Frederick Reynolds, by Crabbe, and by Henry Angelo.

To begin with Holcroft :

" The mob came to Newgate and publickly declared they would release the confined rioters. When they arrived at the door of the prison, they demanded of Mr. Akerman, the keeper, to have their comrades immediately delivered up to them ; and upon his persisting to do his duty, by refusing, they began some to break his windows, some to batter the doors and entrances into the cells with pick-axes and sledge-hammers, others with ladders to climb the vast walls, while others collected fire-brands, and whatever combustibles they could find, and flung into his dwelling house. What contributed more than anything to the spreading of the flames was the great quantity of household furniture belonging to Mr. Akerman, which they threw out of the windows, piled up against the doors, and set fire to ; the force of which presently communicated to the house, from the house to the chapel, and from thence, by the assistance of the mob, all through the prison. A party of constables, to the amount of a hundred, came to the assistance of the keeper ; these the mob made a lane for, and suffered to pass till they were entirely encircled, when they attacked them with great fury, broke their staffs, and converted them into brands, which they hurled about wherever the fire, which was spreading very fast, had not caught. It is almost incredible to think that it were possible to destroy a building of such amazing strength and extent, with so much swiftness as they accomplished this. As soon as the flames had destroyed Mr. Akerman's house, and were communicated to the wards and cells, all the prisoners, to the amount of three hundred, among whom were four ordered for execution on the Thursday following, were released. The activity of the mob was amazing. They dragged out the prisoners by the hair of the head, by legs or arms, or whatever part they could lay hold of. They broke open the doors of the different entrances as easily as if they had all their lives been acquainted with the intricacies of the place, to let the confined escape. Great numbers were let out at the door that leads to the Sessions House, and so well planned were all the manœuvres of these desperate

ruffians, that they had placed centinels at the avenues, to prevent any of the prisoners from being conveyed to other jails. Thus was the strongest and most durable prison in England, and in the building of which the nation had expended immense sums, demolished, the bare walls excepted, which were too thick and strong to yield to the force of fire, in the space of a few hours."

"The cellars under Mr. Akerman's house," adds the *Morning Chronicle*, "were emptied, and the liquor of all kinds brought up in pails and hats and drunk in the streets."

Angelo continues his fragmentary recollections thus :

"Having placed myself at the corner of the narrow lane facing the debtors' door, I had a full view of what was going on. Whilst I was standing facing the door, an offer was made me that upon paying sixpence I might place myself at the garret-window, which I readily accepted. Very soon after I saw the first attack of the mob with pickaxes and sledge hammers. The debtors' door was broken open, and not many minutes after the smoke was seen issuing in different places. Here I saw a new species of gaol delivery. The captives marched out with all the honours of war, accompanied by a musical band of rattling fettters."

Angelo appears to have been on edge to mix in the throng :

"Leaving my place of safety I got to the lane with difficulty, as it was crowded with felons, and in many of the houses I heard them knocking off their fettters. Whilst listening to the noise of the hammers at one house, I narrowly escaped being knocked down for my curiosity. . . . However I got to Fleet Market, and when in Fleet Street I beheld the light horse walking their horses towards the spot, as if returning gently from a review."

Frederick Reynolds reproduces the scene with dramatic instinct :

"The mob fired the Jail in many places before they were enabled to force their way through the massive bars and



The Drawing-Room scene at Netherfield during the Ball at Meryton.

gates which guarded its entrance. The wild gestures of the mob without, and the shrieks of the prisoners within, expecting an instantaneous death from the flames, the thundering descent of huge pieces of building, the deafening clangor of red hot iron bars, striking in terrible concussion the pavement below, and the loud triumphant yells and shouts of the demoniac assailants on each new success, formed an awful and terrific scene. At length the work of ruin was accomplished and while the gaolers and turnkeys were either flying or begging for their lives, forth came the prisoners, blaspheming and jumping in their chains. The convicts being taken to the different blacksmiths in the neighbourhood, I followed one of them, who was to have been hanged on the following Monday. On some sudden alarm, the mob hastily brought him to the door with a fetter still on one leg : then quitting their hold on him and receding, they cried ‘A clear way, a clear run.’ Swifter than the arrow from a Tartar’s bow flew the rogue. I heard of him a few months after in the Newgate Calendar.”

To his beloved Myra, Crabbe wrote :

“ . . . They set fire to Akerman’s house, broke in, and threw every piece of furniture into the street, firing them also in an instant. The engines came, but were only suffered to preserve the private houses near the prison.

As I was standing near the spot, there approached another body of men, I suppose 500, and Lord George Gordon in a coach, drawn by a mob towards Alderman Bull’s, bowing as he passed along. He is a lively-looking young man in appearance and nothing more, though just now the reigning hero.

By eight o’clock, Akerman’s house was in flames. I went close to it, and never saw anything so dreadful. The prison was a remarkably strong building, but, determined to force it, they broke the gates with crows and other instruments, and climbed up the outside of the cell part, which joins the two great wings of the building, where the felons were confined ; and I stood where I plainly saw their operations. They broke the roof, tore away the rafters, and having got ladders they descended. Not Orpheus himself had more courage or better luck ; flames all around them, and a body of soldiers expected, they defied and laughed at all opposition.

The prisoners escaped. I stood and saw about twelve women and eight men ascend from their confinement to the open air, and they were conducted through the street in their chains. Three of these were to be hanged on Friday. At Akerman's house, now a mere shell of brick-work, they kept a store of flame for other purposes. It became red-hot, and the doors and windows appeared like the entrance to so many volcanoes. With some difficulty they then fired the debtors' prison—broke the doors—and they, too, all made their escape.

Tired of the scene I went home, and returned again at eleven o'clock at night. I met large bodies of horse and foot soldiers coming to guard the Bank, and some houses of Roman Catholics near it. Newgate was at this time open to all ; anyone might get in, and, what was never the case before, anyone might get out. I did both ; for the people were now chiefly lookers on. The mischief was done, and the doers of it gone to another part of the town.

But I must not omit what struck me most. About ten or twelve of the mob getting to the top of the debtors' prison, whilst it was burning, to halloo, they appeared rolled in black smoke mixed with sudden bursts of fire—like Milton's infernals who were as familiar with flame as with each other. On comparing notes with my neighbours, I find I saw but a small part of the mischief. They say Lord Mansfield's house is now in flames."

The mob insisted upon lights being put up at every window in joy for the destruction of Newgate ; the illumination accordingly was general.

" You can hardly represent to yourself," says Romilly " so melancholy a sight as this appearance of involuntary rejoicing, and, at the same time to behold the sky glowing on every side with the light of different conflagrations, as if the city had been taken by an enemy."

It is necessary to outline the circumstances in which Lord George found himself prominently placed, as Crabbe described him, on this crucial occasion. Sir P. Jennings Clerke, who craved leave in the House to make a statement of his own movements this night, thus explains the situation :

WILLIAM HENRY FOX TALBOT
BRIAN GRANTING THE BURGESS
THE BURGESS

on the 26th of June 1850
P. M. at the Royal Society's
Meeting Room, Queen Street, London.



" Many Members left the House together, and as we came through the line of Guards I happened to be very near Lord George, with whom I had no personal acquaintance before. When we had passed the Guards the people crowded about us to such an extent that I became alarmed and said to Lord George ' Come you must be my protector.' When we had got a little way I believe he rather wanted protection himself they crowded so prodigiously upon us. On reaching the Horn Tavern there was a chariot standing outside. Looking up at a window Lord George said to its owner, ' Wigan, I am in great distress, will you lend me your chariot ? ' Mr. Wigan answering ' Yes,' Lord George stepped in. I would have escaped, but I could not, and was glad to get in with Lord George whom I asked to set me down in Whitehall, where I was dining with a friend, concluding we should drive away beyond the crowd. But in an instant they surrounded the chariot, taking the horses off ; they got upon the traces and hung upon the doors and you might have walked upon the people they were so thick. We were dragged away through Temple Bar and the City. I believe they ran over twenty people going along, they never stopped for anybody. At the Mansion House they gave three cheers to the Lord Mayor. Then they said, ' Come, Lord George, let us hear the resolution of the House.' I began to be rather alarmed because they had thought the House had decided in their favour, but there was so much shouting, noise and bustle they did not hear what he said, and they let the chariot go on to Alderman Bull's house in Leadenhall Street. When we reached there, there was such a prodigious crowd it was some time before we could get in. The mob remained, and Lord George was advised to send word he was gone from thence by a back door in hopes they would disperse, but we waited there an hour and a half to no purpose. Then some of Mr. Bull's family told Lord George it was in vain to think the mob would quit the house while he was in it, and they would not believe the story of his having left it. Accordingly Lord George went down and got into the chariot and they ran away with him . . . When the coast was clear in half-an-hour's time I got a hackney-coach and came away."

When asked by Kenyon what Lord George said

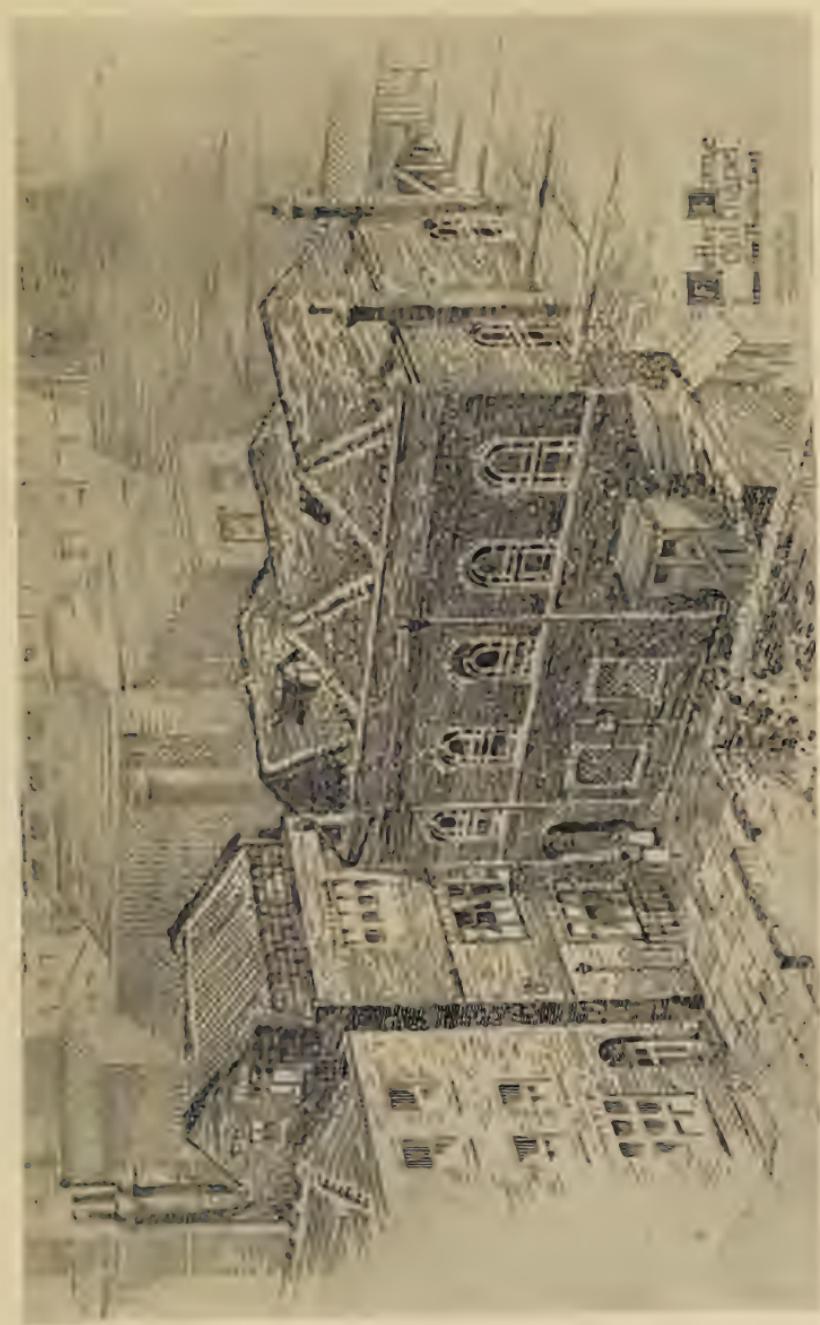
when the men took the horses out of the chariot, Sir Philip answered :

"Gordon said for God's sake go home. While you behave in this unpeaceable way nothing in your petition can be complied with ; the House will never consent to it. It was impossible for any man to take more pains than my Lord George did to prevail upon the people to disperse, and he said so much. I assure you that when they put him to read the resolution of the House of Commons it was so very different from the hopes he had held out to them I was afraid they would have fell upon us, and tore us to pieces. I did not enjoy my situation at all."

Although Sir Philip Clerke makes no specific mention of their presence at Newgate, nor was able to explain how the carriage came to be transported unbidden to Alderman Bull's, it is clear from Crabbe's narrative that it was common knowledge whither Lord George was bound. Bull had seconded Gordon's motions on the presentation of the Petition on Friday, and when a few days later it was remarked in the House that the constables in Bull's ward had worn blue cockades, the Alderman was unable to deny it. The mob were evidently cognisant of a close link between Gordon and Bull ; there was in fact a "prodigious crowd" around Bull's house previous to Gordon reaching Leadenhall Street.

It will be noticed in the accompanying illustration (Plate XIV.) that the man on the extreme left is distributing *England in Blood* and is advertising the *Thunderer*.

Whilst the smoke of Newgate belches into the atmosphere, and fork-tongued flames are licking and disintegrating its walls and luridly tingeing the sky, let us take a momentary glance into the sombre



XV. THE MORAVIAN CHURCH

precincts of the Moravian Church which still lies hid from view at the corner of Fetter Lane and Nevill's Court, for within it will be espied one who suggests the original character of the staunch locksmith in *Barnaby Rudge*.

"We still had our congregation meeting at eight in the evening," says Hutton their warden, "which was attended by almost as many brethren and sisters as at other times. This meeting will not easily be forgotten by those that were present. Br. Clement spoke with a calm happy and tenderly affected heart, as if in the profoundest peace. . . . At the time Newgate Prison was set on fire ; the sight of which greatly affrighted some brethren and sisters in the Hall who perceived it. Br. Liddington, a smith, was called out in great haste ; a party of the mob having come to his house with a number of Newgate prisoners to have their irons knocked off, on refusal of which they threatened immediately to destroy his house."

The rumour, reported by Crabbe, that Lord Mansfield's town residence—which stood at the north-east corner of Bloomsbury Square—was in the hands of a virtually unchecked mob was justified.

"Sir John Hawkins received a message from Lord Mansfield," records his daughter Miss Hawkins, "requesting him to come immediately to the Square. Sir John went thither on foot, attended by constables, and found his Lordship utterly at a loss to know what to do. The mob had given notice of their intention to visit him, and a great concourse of people was assembled as spectators of the impending mischief. Sir John advised sending for a military force, and while this was carrying into effect Lord Mansfield asked him to go and see the Archbishop of York who lived in the adjoining house. The Guards came, and there is little doubt that the attack would soon have been repelled, but Lord Mansfield insisted on their not remaining on the spot, but being ready when summoned. My father remonstrated ; he represented the impossibility there would be of making any armed force of use when not immediately at hand ;

but his Lordship insisted that the Guards should be stationed at the vestry of St. George's church . . . though the commanding officer protested against a proceeding so absurd.

While Lord Mansfield was using that liberty to think which the reluctant obedience of the Guards seemed to afford him, a verbal message was delivered to my father from the Duke of Northumberland requesting him to come to Northumberland House. Sir John then asked Lord Mansfield and the Archbishop what were their intentions. He represented that without Guards on the spot he could render them but little assistance, and therefore was ready with their concurrence to obey the Duke's summons. It seemed difficult to decide even on this point: it needed his own casting vote. He gave it for active exertion, and followed the messenger sent for him, proceeding as before on foot. In the way they met a large party of the rioters who were just then in all the exultation of a successful attack on the gaol of Newgate and were preceded by the deep-toned bell which was part of the spoil.

The Duke asked my father¹ what he thought his best plan for proceeding with the mob, who had likewise promised him their company. My father's advice was to have the soldier's drawn up in the court-yard, with their faces towards the Strand, and on the first summons to open the gates; and then, after due form, should they not retreat, to suffer the soldiers to fire over their heads. The Duke asked my father if he would stay with him; he replied 'Certainly, for he could do no good at Lord Mansfield's.' They sat down to supper. News came of the demolition of Lord Mansfield's, but day dawned and no attack was attempted on Northumberland House. The Duke then proposed retiring to rest, and very politely said to Sir John 'Lord Percy's bed is ready for you.' My father accepted the offer of rest, but lay down in his clothes. . . ."²

The authorities were also warned by the Recorder of London of the mob's approach to Lord Mansfield's:

¹ The Duke had sent no message to Sir John Hawkins; the knight was received with surprise, but gladly retained. How Sir John came to be summoned could never be discovered. It was no doubt a trick effected by those engineering the riots, who were determined on Mansfield's undoing.

² *Memoirs of Laetitia Matilda Hawkins*, 1824, ii. 108.

"Mr. Sergt. Adair presents his respects to the Earl of Hillsborough, and acquaints him that the mob are beginning to assemble with colours flying in Bloomsbury Square. The force the Sergt. before mentioned will be absolutely necessary for the secure protection of Ormond Street, Queen Square and the neighbouring streets." Lord Thurlow lived in Ormond Street and the Recorder himself in Queen Square. On the Archbishop of York telling Lord Mansfield that each of them had been signalled out as the next victims, the Chief Justice declined to believe that men could be so wicked. "What have you and I to do with the Popery Bill?" he exclaimed. Dr. Markham assured him that the causes lay deeper, and that nothing was so easy as to make a mob the instrument of private malice. At about nine o'clock forty Guards arrived, as has been said, twenty men for Lord Mansfield and twenty men for the Bishop. The Bishop wished to keep his moiety, but the entire guard was marched to St. George's Church to remain at hand; there being but one officer, an ensign, it could not well be divided. Markham then obtained promises from certain Justices of the Peace to come at once if necessity arose, but in the event they were not to be found, so fearful were they that their houses would be served in like manner as those of Hyde and Rainsforth.

The Archbishop, finding his neighbour impervious to advice, returned to his own home to make such preparations as he foresaw it would be foolhardy to omit. He sent away his young children and

wished to remove the whole of his large family, but his wife and eldest daughter would on no account leave him. Determined to defend his house, the prelate distributed such arms as he possessed between his brother, his own servants, two servants sent him by Chief Baron Skynner, and servants offered to him by neighbours. In this situation the household remained until half-past twelve, when the mob came with great shouts and brandishing flags. Stopping at the Bishop's door the ringleaders gave out that so soon as they had done their business at the corner house they should come to his. Markham was consoled to observe that Lord and Lady Mansfield, and the two Miss Murrays, had just time to quit their house, for a few minutes later the crash of demolition was heard. A fire was soon blazing at the corner of the Square, into which pictures, parchments, books, manuscripts, harpsichords, the choicest furniture and sumptuous ladies' birthday-suits—worn at the celebration of the King's birthday the previous day—were flung from the windows.¹ The intruders quickly consumed a cellar of valuable wine. Shortly after there marched to the Bishop's door the forty soldiers from the church. Markham begged the officer to act forthwith, but the ensign in the absence of a magistrate absolutely refused; the prelate then tried to induce him to act on the authority of a constable then in the house, offering to indemnify him to any amount, but the officer

¹ One fellow of tall stature was sufficiently remarkable. Every two minutes he appeared at a window with a door torn off its hinges, a large fragment of a wainscot or a splendid mirror, and as he hurled them out bellowed forth execrations against Papists and their abettors.

persisted in his refusal. Notification of the deadlock reached Whitehall, as the following note, preserved in the Public Record Office, shows :

“ Guildhall, Westminster, 7th June, 1780.

The Duke of Northumberland presents his compliments to Lord Stormont, and is happy to inform him that a Mr. Durden, one of the Magistrates for the county of Middlesex, is gone to join the military at Lord Mansfield’s in Bloomsbury Square.”¹

Between four and five o’clock on Wednesday morning a second party of soldiers arrived accompanied by Mr. Durden, who ordered the soldiers to fire. It was the first shot discharged in these memorable scenes, and resulted in the immediate death of six or seven persons and in the dispersal of the mob. The officer in charge of the soldiers—Colonel John Woodford by name, and brother-in-law of Lord George by the grim irony of fate—imagining his duties at an end marched his men away, leaving the ground clear for the return of the mob. Within a quarter of an hour they were back ; this time with fire-balls and tow. In an incredibly short time Lord Mansfield’s house was in flames. The Square rapidly filled, and the crowd augmented by thieves and by spectators. The Bishop’s position was now perilous. The soldiers were gone ; he was surrounded by rioters enraged by the execution the military had done ; the house next his own enveloped in flame, while a rabble swarmed beneath his windows vowed that though Lord Mansfield

¹ Mr. Durden and Lord Mansfield were not unknown to each other, a magisterial decision of Durden’s having, on appeal, given rise to a leading case, *Crepps v. Durden*, decided by the Chief Justice in 1777 ; see Shirley’s *Selection of Leading Cases at Common Law*.

had escaped he should not. A number of well-dressed men directed the offensive, one of whom exclaimed : “ You stay too long here [at Lord Mansfield’s] ; you forget the Archbishop. Come my lads that one house more and then to bed.”

The Bishop’s brother, wife and daughter, becoming seriously distressed for his safety, implored him to attempt an escape. At last he was prevailed on, but the stable yard at the rear of the houses was filled with rioters drawn thither by the dead body of a woman killed by the firing, which had been carried to an ale-house opening on the yard. The Bishop with his wife and daughter managed however to slip by a side door into the house of his neighbour on the south side, Colonel Goldsworthy. But the exit at the back was here no less dangerous than from the Prelate’s own, and their only chance of flight lay through the Square. The Bishop covered his purple coat with his brother’s great cloak, donned his brother’s hat and waited. Presently Mansfield’s house blazed with great fierceness, which drew towards it the most active rioters. Markham seized the opportunity and, with wife on one arm and daughter on the other, walked out of Colonel Goldsworthy’s to Mr. Wilmot’s at the southern corner, where the door was at once opened to receive them. Very shortly after Chief Baron Skynner’s coach drove into Mr. Wilmot’s stable-yard. Mounting immediately the party headed for the Chief Baron’s house in the Adelphi, but scarcely had they done so when a rascally hackney-driver bellowed from his box : “ The Archbishop of York is in that coach



XVI. BLOOMSBURY SQUARE IN 1787

with the blind up ; he has another hat on, but I saw his face." Instantly the coachman whipped up the horses and they reached the Adelphi, but the Bishop learned afterwards that the mob swore to have Mr. Wilmot's house down for harbouring him.¹ The Chief Baron, who had played the part of so good a friend, welcomed the Markhams, and learning that their house was still in serious jeopardy he wrote forthwith to Lord Stormont :

"Adelphi. Wednesday morning.

My dear Lord. It is a determination of the Rioters to pull down the house of the Archbishop of York. I write this note, fearing I may not find you at home, to state to your Lordship the necessity of sending a large body of soldiers immediately to draw up before his house."

The Archbishop, writing to his son, a naval officer at sea, as the riots subsided, remarked to him :

"I must tell you that a fatal error had prevailed among the military that they could not in any way act without the orders of a civil magistrate, which is the case when a great mob has assembled, but has not yet proceeded to acts of violence. But when they have begun to commit felonies any subject, and the military among the rest, is justified in Common Law in using all methods to prevent illegal acts."

This being a correct statement of the law, the reader will perceive that the principles enunciated by the Secretary at War in his letter of this day (*v. p. 72*) to Lord Stormont were unsound, and gave rise to much misunderstanding.

¹ "Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot present their compliments to Lord Amherst, and acquaint his Lordship that the mob threaten their house the next in Bloomsbury Square, and beseech instantly a party of Horse Guards (as the mob do not mind the Foot) to come to their assistance directly. 7th June." *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 63.

Sir Nathaniel Wraxall was also an eyewitness of some part of the scene :

" I and three other gentlemen drove to Bloomsbury Square, attracted to that spot by a rumour generally spread that Lord Mansfield's residence was either already burnt or destined for destruction. Hart Street and Great Russell Street presented each to the view as we passed, large fires composed of furniture taken from the houses of magistrates, or other obnoxious individuals. Quitting the coach, we crossed the Square, and had scarcely got under the wall of Bedford House when we heard the door of Lord Mansfield's house burst open with violence. In a few minutes, all the contents of the apartments being precipitated from the windows were piled up and wrapt in flames. A file of foot-soldiers arriving, drew up near the blazing pile, but without either attempting to quench the fire or to impede the mob, who were indeed far too numerous to admit of their being dispersed, or even intimidated, by a small detachment of infantry. The populace remained masters."

Angelo after witnessing the miscreants at Newgate returned home and sought repose, but his rest was disturbed :

" At that time I lived near Bedford Square. In the night I congratulated myself on being safe at home with a roof over my head, as at times I heard the shouts of the rioters and the next moment the terrible report of soldiers' muskets. I was most alarmed when I heard the noise close to my dwelling; and, looking out of the window, I saw the street crowded with people all in uproar and confusion. I soon learned that Lord Mansfield's house was on fire. My curiosity, not content with having seen so much, urged me the next morning to visit Bloomsbury Square, where I only saw the walls of his lordship's house, the inside was totally bare. Close by the house in a line with Great Russell Street were seen holes where the bullets had struck; this must have taken place when I heard the report of the guns so near my dwelling."

So virulent was the animosity stirred up against the Lord Chief Justice that the mob, suspecting he

had directed his course to Caen Wood, his country seat at Highgate, they set out to wreak their further vengeance on this mansion.¹

"The lawless brutality of the mob," says Reynolds, "was only equalled by their cowardice. . . . I saw three or four hundred of these No-Popery ruffians commencing the destruction of a large house in Lincoln's Inn Fields; when, the drawing-room windows being suddenly opened, I beheld a lady and her servants boldly present pistols. The mob were out of sight in an instant."²

Lord North's official residence in Downing Street was attacked about two in the morning with flambeaux and faggots, but a small detachment of the Light Horse charged them in such a manner as to make many of the mob "repent the rashness of their proceedings."³ The official report of this incident runs :

"Wednesday morning at one o'clock I was ordered with twenty Dragoons to protect Lord North's house in Downing Street, where the mob soon after appeared and I was obliged to charge through them, when three men were cut by the Dragoons under my command, but I believe no lives lost. David Howell, Lieut. Queen's Lt. Dragoons."⁴

The Lord Chancellor's house had been intended for destruction no less than the Lord Chief Justice's. But while Lord Mansfield declined to admit soldiers within his portals, Lord Thurlow was glad to avail himself of military protection. Thirty-one guards were consequently stationed at 45 Ormond Street,

¹ For an account of the rioters' drunken orgy, said to have occurred at the Spaniard's Tavern near Caen Wood, see Prickett's *History of High Gate*; and for an incident at Copenhagen House *en route* see Wroth's *Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 156.

² *Life and Times of Frederick Reynolds*, 1827, i. 128.

³ *Memoirs and Correspondence of Sir Robert Murray Keith*, 1849, ii. 97.

⁴ *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 31. Queen's Lt. Dragoons .no

where the captain of the company, knowing the great shortage of men, thought proper “to play the old soldier,” and to multiply his handful of guards in the best manner the circumstances permitted. Placing armed sentinels at the parlour windows, he ushered the rest through the house, and passing them out by a garden-door at the back which communicated with the open fields behind, he—by the circuitous marches of this small body from Ormond Street to the Duke of Bolton’s, and counter-marches from Bolton House through Queen Square to Ormond Street again—led the rioters, who were congregating, to believe the Chancellor’s house was full of men.¹

During the evening a letter, fraught with alarm, reached Lord Stormont :

“Mansion House, 6th June, 1780.
9 o’clock.

My Lords—I have this moment received information that the mob intend making an attack upon the Bank. The Civil Power of the City being insufficient to prevent it, I must entreat your Lordships will immediately send a sufficient number of Horse and Foot to assist the Civil Power on the occasion.

I am, etc.,
B. KENNEDY, Mayor.”

To this urgent request Lord Stormont replied :

“St. James’s, 6th June, 1780.
45 m. past nine o’clock.

The instant I received your Lordship’s letter I sent a copy of it to the Field Officer of the Guards in Waiting, with directions to him to send to your Lordship instantly a sufficient detachment of Foot Guards and Light Dragoons or Horse Guards. I have also sent a copy of your Lordship’s letter to the Commanding Officer in the Tower.”

¹ *The Life of William, late Earl of Mansfield*, by John Holliday, 1797, p. 41.



NO POPERY or NEWGATE REFORMER.

The Whig has a Protestant look at the front
The Face and the Blasphemous will give you a hint
Reform he can in hopes to secure
While his practice is only to burn and to thieve.

Published as the Act Directs. London.

This activity is reflected in the next day's *Morning Post*:

"Large detachments of the military were posted round the Bank all last night."

Wrote Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Thrale:

"It is agreed that if the rioters had seized the Bank on Tuesday, at the height of the panic, when no resistance had been prepared, they might have carried irrecoverably away whatever they had found."

During the night other outrages were committed. A Catholic pawnbroker, Lynch by name, had his house in Golden Lane completely pulled down, and his goods burnt in Old Street. The house of another Catholic, Mr. Lyon, in Bunhill Row, was also gutted and all the furniture burnt.

During the disturbances at Newgate, the College of Physicians was in great danger and several engines attended in Warwick Lane (*v. Plate XXV.*) in readiness to endeavour to preserve the building, but were prevented playing by the populace.¹

While one party of the mob were destroying Sir John Fielding's house and everything in it, another party attacked the Ship Ale-house (*v. p. 43*), in Gate Street,² belonging to Mr. Bevis, taking the furniture and everything combustible into Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they burnt them.³ At the same time another party destroyed a Romish school in Little Russell Street, Bloomsbury.

¹ *Gazetteer*, 8th June.

² "The Ship" still stands (though recently rebuilt) at the corner of Gate Street and Little Turnstile, at the north-west corner of the Fields, and it claims to have occupied that site since 1580.

³ Edward Dennis, the hangman, was subsequently found guilty of taking part in this outrage, but he was not hanged as Dickens states.

The increase of crime at the close of the seventeenth century had resulted in insufficient accommodation at Newgate for the incarceration of those under arrest and awaiting trial. To rectify the congestion a building called the New Prison was erected south of the then existing Clerkenwell Bridewell, and therein were lodged the overflow from Newgate. For a full century Clerkenwell Bridewell and the New Prison stood side by side, but the former was abolished about 1804. Hither this night (Tuesday) came a party of the mob at about half-past eleven. They first paid their attentions to the Bridewell by insisting on a release of the prisoners. The demand not being complied with they broke open the wicket door and brought shavings in order to set fire to the prison. Some reflecting, however, that as the street was narrow the flames might do other damage than that intended, they desisted, and changed their tactics by applying their pickaxes to the gates. The prisoners were soon free, and the mob, bent on effecting their double purpose, swarmed round the New Prison. The keepers, however, immediately drew back the bolts and threw open the doors, whereby "no mischief ensued." But the authorities mistrusted the situation, for the *Public Advertiser* of the 8th observes that "the magistrates who were that evening at Hicks' Hall, Clerkenwell [v. Plate XXV.], retreated precipitately."

Lady Anne Erskine, sister of the eleventh Earl of Buchan, and of Thomas Erskine, the advocate, came in March 1779 to reside in the house attached



View of NORTHAMPTON SPA FIELDS CHAPEL.

With the names of Huntingdon's House, &c.

to the Spafields chapel, Clerkenwell, with their friend Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. Lady Anne describes the lurid night in a letter to the Earl :

" I had been at my brother Thomas on Tuesday, and had drove home as fast as I could about seven o'clock at night, being told the mob were gone to Newgate. By the time I got home it was in flames. From thence the rioters went to Clerkenwell Bridewell, the doors of which they burst open, but as the prisoners were released they did not burn it; and on their approach to the New Prison the doors were thrown open so it likewise escaped the flames. . . . Such a scene my eyes never beheld, and I pray God I never may again. The situation of this place¹ which is high and very open gave us an awful prospect of it. We were surrounded by flames! Six different fires—with that of Newgate towering to the clouds—being full in our view at once, and every hour we were in expectation of this house and chapel making the seventh. Various causes were assigned for its being allotted to destruction. . . . Our turn, we were told, was next, and by this time the scene was truly horrible, for the flames all around had got to such a height that the sky was like blood with the reflection of them. The mob so near that we heard them knocking the irons off the prisoners,² which together with the shouts of those they had released, the huzzas of the rioters, and the universal confusion of the whole neighbourhood made it beyond description. Every moment fresh reports were coming in of new fires breaking out—some true, some false: some that the Parliament House was on fire, others the Palace at Lambeth; but all agreeing in our danger. . . . After the cry had been 'Now for Northampton Chapel!' some of the rioters called out 'Why there?' others 'Better go to the Fleet Prison and let us make another jail-delivery!' on which they turned about and went to the Fleet, and by 2 o'clock in the morning we were freed from immediate danger."

¹ The Spa Fields or Northampton Chapel occupied a building previously known as the Pantheon, erected as a place for Sunday amusements and capable of holding 2,000 persons; the adjoining house was used as a tavern. Lady Huntingdon acquired both. The present church of the Holy Redeemer in Exmouth Street, near the New River Head, stands precisely on its site.

² At Clerkenwell Bridewell, not Newgate.

During the evening Mr. George Cumberland, under Secretary of the Royal Exchange Assurance Company, wrote to his brother the Rev. R. D. Cumberland a letter which merits attention.

" Dear Richard. My cold I caught by standing the greatest part of Sunday night in a wall near the Romish Chapell in Moorfields witnessing scenes which made my heart bleed without being able to prevent them. It was the most singular and unhappy sight in the world. A mob, encouraged by magistrates and protected by Troops, with the most orderly injustice destroying the property of innocent individuals. Next to Lord Gordon, for whom no punishment can be too great, the magistrates of the City deserve an ample share of vengeance from a basely deserted people, having abandoned their proper authority to their own opinions and sacrificed their duty to their prejudices. To this wicked and scandalous neglect on Sunday evening may all the riots of yesterday and to-day be attributed. Grown bold by sufferance they have broke open Newgate, set the prisoners at large, and at the moment it is in flames. The Mansion House is to share the same fate. The soldiers, it is said, laid down their arms to-day on being ordered to fire. There are not wanting people who bribe them with money and liquor to so shameful a pitch has all respect for good government arisen."

John Drummond, who rescued Lord Stormont on Friday, made the following important communication to him this day :

" The unruly mob which now pervades London and its environs are formed into systematical groups for carrying forward much destructive measures. They have formed a regular plan to attack objects of their rage—pointed out to them by their infernal chiefs—on whom they mean to wreak a cruel revenge. Indeed there is no saying who shall sleep in safety in a few days more if this mob is encouraged by a kind of passive behaviour which hitherto marks the executive power. I would therefore advise you to take every precaution for the security of whatever is valuable and dear to you.

I have been watchful of all the motions of this infernal

combination since they rose, and I have even at the hazard of my life gone amongst them to penetrate their horrid purposes which are too diabolical for repetition, but I hope the disposition of the military and their orders to quell these monsters will frustrate their further designs. Thousands crowd now, even from the country, to join them. Their designs if not immediately curb'd will in a few days more produce scenes of cruelty and conflagration throughout every part of London and its contours."

IV

WEDNESDAY, 7TH JUNE

“ Wednesday night will be remembered by all the present inhabitants of London and Westminster to their latest hour for the horrors and calamities with which it abounded.”—
Dr. BURNEY TO THE REV. T. TWINING.

“ Black Wednesday was the most horrible night I ever beheld, which for six hours together I expected to end in half the town being reduced to ashes.”—HORACE WALPOLE.

THE insurgents’ threats to visit the Fleet, overheard by Lady Anne Erskine, were carried into effect. About one o’clock the rioters demanded the gates of the Prison to be thrown open, and the keepers, fearing the building would be fired, were forced to obey. The mob proceeded to demolition, but the prisoners begging for time to remove their goods, and the request falling in with the humour of the crowd it was magnanimously granted. One day was allowed for the purpose.

Thoroton wrote to the Duke of Rutland : “ Never was there so riotous a night. I stayed with Lord Rockingham till three in the morning.” George Byng, M.P., notified the Earl of Buckinghamshire :

“ Lord Rockingham’s house was threatened. I sat up both Tuesday and Wednesday night as one of its weak defenders. Had they come there [Grosvenor Square] instead of going to Lord Mansfield’s, I believe they would in some

measure have been quieted, by meeting such a resistance as would have marked out to them how easily a house may be defended."

David Miles, the constable who apprehended Bund for robbing Count Haslang, received vindictive attention from the populace. On the 5th June he attended at Bow Street at the examination of the culprit. His name appearing as a witness in the papers on the Tuesday, his house and all his goods were burnt between midnight on Tuesday the 6th and three o'clock on Wednesday morning the seventh.

The house of Mr. Cox, which stood opposite Free-masons' Hall in Great Queen Street, was stripped of its furniture on Wednesday morning, and a bon-fire made of it outside. Mr. Cox, a brewer, was both a Catholic and a Justice of the Peace. The guards passed his house at about nine o'clock, but took no notice, being ordered to the Lord Chancellor's residence in Great Ormond Street, which they surrounded while every valuable was conveyed away in carts.

Early in the morning rioters forcibly entered an ironmonger's in Holborn, compelling him to deliver up his stock of crowbars. At midday youths, armed with iron bludgeons torn from the railings of Lord Mansfield's house, with their war-cry of "No Popery," extorted money at every shop in Holborn. No one durst resist lest the mob should be called down upon their houses. One man bestriding a horse declined to accept anything but gold from those he waylaid. Similar parties levied contributions in other districts, but Holborn was particularly attractive

at the moment, as Langdale, on the verge of desperation, was attempting to disarm evil intentions towards him by a free distribution of spirits. To add to the confusion the morning's *Public Advertiser* announced that between twenty to thirty thousand associators were expected to arrive from Kent and Essex. In the course of the day a large quantity of chain shot and cannon ball was sent under a strong guard to Woolwich.

During the morning Dr. Johnson walked to Newgate to view its still glowing ruins ; he was moved to indignation at the sight : "The Protestants were plundering the Sessions-house at the Old Bailey. There were not I believe a hundred ; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day."

Lord Stormont wrote to Lord Amherst :

" St. James, 7th June, 30 m. past 10 a.m.

As there is great reason to believe that Lord Mansfield's house at Kenwood between Highgate and Hampstead is threatened with the same destruction that his house in town met with last night, I hope your Lordship will be so good as to order immediately a detachment of eight horse for its protection. The servants there will point out the avenues that ought most to be secured."¹

Lord Stormont's request, as the following report to Lord Amherst shows, was duly carried into effect :

"A party under my command, consisting of 18 privates and 2 non-commiss^d. officers of the 16th Lt. Dragoons and a N.C.O. and six of the Horse Grenadiers, march'd from the Horse Guards on Wednesday 7th inst. to Caen Wood, where I dispersed about 60 of the Rioters who had an intention of

¹ *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 56.

setting fire to Lord Mansfield's House. I returned from this duty at 8 o'clock in the evening of the same day.

W.M. BYGROVE,
Lieut. 16th Light Dragoons.”¹

The following letter from Lord Amherst reads as if he were himself becoming very uneasy at the posture of affairs :

“ Wednesday morning, 10 o'clock, 7th June, 1780.

The South Hants Regiment of militia at present at Lambeth are to receive their Guns from the Tower, and it will be the quietest and best way, I think, to send them by water to Lambeth. The motion of Artillery would be very alarming through the City, and better to avoid it. Send them directly, if the wind permits. The Regiment at Lambeth will be ready to receive them.”²

It is unusual for bankers to refer to their premises in such modest terms as did Thomas Coutts to Lord Amherst :

“ Strand, 7th June, 1780.

My Lord—The unprotected situation of my shop, equally distant from the City and The Horse Guards, and the various and great Property of many individuals it contains, made me resolve to apply to the Secretary at War for a guard of Soldiers to be in my house this evening and till the present alarm is over. I am this moment inform'd my application should have been to your Lordship. I hope your Lordship will consider this a Public Object, and order me a Guard accordingly to be conceal'd in my back rooms or at my call in case of any attack. THOMAS COUTTS.”³

Between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning Lord George Gordon called at the Queen's [Buckingham] House. It was a noteworthy incident, and is narrated here in the words of Lord Stormont when a witness at Gordon's trial :

“ I was attending his Majesty with several of his other confidential servants. A page came and scratched at the

¹ *Amherst Papers*, civ. f. 82. ² *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 48. ³ *Id.* f. 70.

door ; I went out to him by order ; and he said that Lord George was at the gate desiring to see his Majesty. I gave directions that Lord George should be brought to a room in the Collonade. I then went to him and asked what his lordship desired. His answer was that he desired to see the King because it would be of effectual service in suppressing the riots. I delivered it exactly to the King. The answer I delivered to his lordship was : ‘ It is impossible for the King to see Lord George Gordon until he has given sufficient proofs of his allegiance and loyalty by employing those means which, he says, he has in his power to quell the disturbances, and restore peace to this capital.’ ”

Wraxall has recorded the outcome of the King’s deliberations this morning :

“ The common danger suspended the virulence of political enmity. Alarmed at the prospect of impending destruction some of the leaders of the Opposition repaired, unasked, to St. James’s. The Marquis of Rockingham hearing that a Privy Council was summoned, made his appearance in an undress, his hair disordered and with testimonies of great consternation. Nor did he, when the King was present, spare the Ministers for having allowed the assemblage of people to take place in St. George’s Fields. . . . To the decision manifested by his Majesty on this occasion, the safety of the metropolis is principally to be ascribed. Doubts existed whether persons riotously collected together and committing outrages might legally be fired on by the military without staying to read the Riot Act. Mr. Wedderburn, then Attorney-General, having been called in, and ordered by the King to deliver his official opinion, stated that any such assemblage might be dispersed by military force without waiting for forms or reading the Riot Act. ‘ Is that your declaration of the law as Attorney-General ? ’ said the King. Wedderburn answering in the affirmative, ‘ Then so let it be done,’ rejoined his Majesty. The Attorney-General forthwith drew up the Order on which Lord Amherst acted the same evening.”

Dr. Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale : “ The King said in Council that the magistrates had not done

their duty, but that he would do his own"; while Baretti expressed the opinion that had it not been for the King's vigorous measures London must have been all burnt to the ground.

Lord Townshend threw out a belated suggestion to Lord Stormont:

" Portman Square, 7th June, 1780.

The Justices are few . . . I believe I am a Justice of the Peace for Middlesex, being a Privy Councillor. Why should not every one of us [*i.e.* Privy Councillors] agree to act, and there would be Justices enough."

The office of "Justice" was then considered scarcely reputable, and men of rank and fashion held aloof from exercising the functions attached to it. Their reticence was well illustrated by Lord Mansfield, who could himself have read the Riot Act in Bloomsbury Square, though the reasons for judges hesitating to perform such a ministerial act are more cogent, since by virtue of their high office they may at any time be called upon to review the actions and decisions of justices. Lord Townshend¹ doubtless learned in a few hours that the King had cut the Gordian knot.

One precautionary measure suggested was embodied in a note delivered at the Secretary of State's Office on Wednesday morning:

" My Lord—It would be a prudent caution in Government to endeavour to secure the arms of such gun-makers as have large stocks on hand. This caution should be extended to Birmingham. . . . I beg leave to observe that

¹ George Townshend, fourth Viscount and first Marquis Townshend, Director-General of Ordnance, Viceroy of Ireland, 1767-1772. Governor of Chelsea Hospital, 1795.

my principles and hand-writing are known to Lord Amherst.
Your Lordship's unknown humble servant, G. G."¹

Lord Hillsborough at once acted on this far-seeing proposal by issuing directions :

" 7th June, 1780.

Master General and Principal officers of the Ordnance : As it is of the utmost importance that the several Gunsmiths and Armourers in and about London and Westminster should be desired to take down from sight and other ways conceal Arms and Guns, etc., you are desired to take every method in your power to attain this purpose."

That the gunsmiths disinterestedly obeyed the behest a letter from Mr. Rous, M.P., shows :

" Inner Temple, Wednesday evening, 8 o'clock.

Mr. Rous presents his compliments to Lord Stormont, acquaints him that he has friends assembled abundantly sufficient for defense, but they have not been able to procure proper arms. He therefore takes the liberty to renew the request to be furnished with arms if not more than ten fire-locks. The gunsmiths very prudently have removed all their firearms."

Their readiness to comply is also shown in the following minute :

" In consequence of Lord Hillsborough's directions, Mr. Day of the Small Gun Office was sent to the several principal gunsmiths who had all prudently kept their arms out of sight, and promised to send their stock of arms into the Tower which they have begun to do. 7th June."

Two notices were circulated on Wednesday respecting the blue cockades, the wearing of which

¹ Lest the reader might credit this letter to Gordon, be it stated that the original is in a handwriting differing entirely from that of Lord George. The *Amherst Papers* disclose that many prominent citizens threw out the same suggestion, among them the celebrated Jeremy Bentham, who appears to have been seriously perturbed by the riots.

was now become ambiguous. The military authorities gave warning that

"Whereas many timorous persons wear blue cockades in their hatts from a notion that it contributes to their safety, it is an act of charity to inform them that for the future whoever appears with this ensign of rebellion will be consider'd as an enemy to Peace and Order and treated as such."

The other, emanating probably from the Protestant Association, ran :

"It is earnestly requested of all peaceable and well-disposed persons, as well Protestants associated as others, that they will abstain from wearing blue cockades, as these ensigns are now assumed by a set of miscreants whose purpose is to burn this city, and plunder its inhabitants, and who wish by distributing amongst better-disposed persons, and prevailing on them to wear these marks and distinctions, to screen themselves from the detestation and punishment due to their enormous crimes."

During the afternoon an incident took place which was later regarded as tending to establish a close link between Gordon and those directing the outrages. Its import may be gathered from the evidence of one Richard Pond given at Gordon's trial :

Examined by the Attorney-General.

- Q.* Look at that paper ; is it signed by Lord George Gordon ?
A. I saw him sign it.
Q. Why did you apply to him ? *A.* To obtain security for my house.
Q. Did it obtain security for your house ?
A. That I cannot take upon me positively to say.
Q. Did you produce it to the mob. *A.* I did.
Q. Was your house pulled down. *A.* It was not.
Q. Was it inhabited by Catholicks.
A. Yes ; I have the house on lease, and my under tenant is a Catholick.

The document in question was then read :

" All true friends to the Protestants I hope will be particular and do no injury to the property of any true Protestant, as I am well assured the proprietor of this house is a staunch and worthy friend to the cause. G. GORDON."

Cross-examined by Mr. Kenyon.

- Q.* Where was Lord George when he signed that paper ?
A. In a coach.
Q. Was not one of the City magistrates with him ?
A. Yes ; Mr. Pugh.
Q. Did you bring that paper ready written ? *A.* I did.
Q. You told him it would be of use to you if he would sign it ? *A.* Yes.
Q. Did he read it before he signed it ? *A.* I cannot positively say.

It was well known that Somerset House was intended to be sacrificed this day, nevertheless Sir Joshua Reynolds, as President of the Royal Academy, conceived it his duty to pass the whole day within its walls, where the Academy was then housed.

Horace Walpole, who retired to Twickenham to avoid the fatigues of the King's Birthday of Monday, returned to town this afternoon, and at five o'clock wrote to the Countess of Ossory :

" Wednesday, 7th June, 1780.

I am heartily glad I am come to town. There was no bearing to remain philosophically in the country, and hear the thousand rumours of every hour, and not know whether one's friends and relations were not destroyed. . . . At Hyde Park Corner I saw guards at the Lord President's door,¹ and in Piccadilly met George Selwyn. He came into my chaise and told me Lord Mansfield's house was in ashes, and that 5000 rioters were marched to Caen Wood. A camp of 10,000 is forming in Hyde Park and the Berkshire militia is just arrived. Wedderburn and Lord Stormont are threatened. . . . The Duchess of Beaufort sent an hour ago

¹ Apsley House, then owned by Lord Bathurst.

THE CROWN - HYDE PARK MDCCCLXXX

XIX



to tell me Lord Ashburnham is threatened and was sending away his poor bed-ridden Countess and children. The Duchess begged to know what I proposed to do. I immediately went to her, and quieted her. . . . The Duchess said the mob were now in Savile Row ; we sent thither and so they are, round Col. Woodford's. . . . The mob are now armed having seized the stores in the Artillery Ground. If anything can surprise your Ladyship it will be what I am going to tell you. Lord George Gordon went to Buckingham House this morning, and asked for an audience. Can you be more surprised still ? He was refused.

P.S. Caen Wood is saved ; a regiment on march met the rioters. It will probably be a black night. Horsemen are riding by with muskets. The pious insurgents will soon have a military chest. They took forty five guineas from Charles Turner yesterday."

A day or two later Walpole writes

" of the melancholy position of Lady Westmoreland [widow of the Earl]. She is sister of Lord George Gordon and wife of Col. Woodford, who is forced to conceal himself, having been the first officer who gave orders to fire at the attack on Lord Mansfield's."

The *London Evening Post* furnished particulars of the assault on Charles Turner :

" The member for York City coming out of the House of Commons was exceedingly ill-treated by the populace, some of whom robbed him of his watch and purse, containing upwards of twenty guineas, and a banknote ; also of two rings one of which belonged to his ancestor Turner, Lord Mayor at the time of the Great Fire in 1666."

As the lethargy and persistent absence of magistrates was becoming notorious, Lord Stormont sought an explanation from the Deputy Clerk of the Peace. His Lordship received the following answer—a curious document, but the Clerk was in a delicate position :

" Wed. 7th June, 1780.

My Lord—I have attended the magistrates since Saturday last and have found them very constant in their

meetings, and on their stations, the few who have attended ; but am sorry to say the number has been very small out of that who are named in the Commission. The excuse they make for non-attendance is so trifling—that of fear of their houses being destroyed. . . . As the troops seemed determined not to act without a magistrate, the calling out the civil power seems highly necessary, which at present they seem very backward.

I am, my Lord, etc.,

CHAS. CARLETON,
Clerk to the Magistrates acting at
Litchfield Street."

While the west-end magistrates were keeping themselves from public view, some in fact flying into the country, what steps were the City's magistrates taking ? Concerning two of their actions this day the evidence is clear. The *Gazetteer* of Thursday announced :

" KENNETH, MAYOR.

" A Common Council holden in the Chamber of the Guildhall of the City of London on Wednesday 7th day of June 1780 Resolved unanimously. That this Court doth agree to petition the Honourable House of Commons against the Act of Parliament lately passed in favour of Roman Catholics."

No resolution could be better calculated to incite the rioters.

Their other move is recorded in Wilkes' *Diary* : " The Prisoners at the City Bridewell released by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen," news which must have been received by the insurgents with a sense of mastery. The City Bridewell refers to the Poultry Compter, which stood on the site of Grocers' Alley. Wood Street Compter and the Poultry Compter were each under the control of one of the two Sheriffs of

London. The circumstances of the release appeared in the press :

"The populace made an attempt upon both Compters but were repulsed by the soldiery. In their attempts on the Poultry Compter two or three were killed. To prevent a new attack upon the Poultry Compter a notice was posted up yesterday evening informing them that the rioters confined there the day before had been discharged by order of the Lord Mayor."

Mrs. Samuel Hoare wrote to her mother from Broad Street during the afternoon :

" . . . The last three nights have presented scenes which my heart is ready to tremble at the remembrance of. . . . It is feared this night will prove more dreadful than any preceding. Whilst I write I am continuously interrupted by small parties passing through the street, and the cry of 'No Popery' is heard from every corner. A large body of them are now assembled in Abchurch Lane, and are attempting to pull down a house, but the Guards have hitherto prevented them from effecting their purpose. . . . There is now such a tumult in the street that I cannot proceed. Farewell."

The troubles of Mr. Mawhood of Smithfield continued :

"Wednesday, 7th June. Mr. G. Whyatt advised moving bonds and notes to Fuller's [Bank] ; he and I did so. The drums beat to arms the militia as we went there. Much hurried moving my stock-in-trade, and greatly alarmed with the mobs which continuously passed our house. Sent an express to desire Dorothy to remove Bishop Challoner to Mrs. Bremer's, my tenant next door, for safety. In the interim Dorothy sent Mr. Mumford to town, expressing her fears for the Bishop and our house. Mumford just refreshed himself when I sent him back to Finchley immediately with orders to move the Bishop to Mr. Bremer's."

In the afternoon the shops were shut ; bits of blue silk, by way of flags, were hung from most houses, and "No Popery!" was chalked on all outer

doors. The terror-stricken Jews of Houndsditch and Duke's Place followed the general example by writing on their shutters "This house is a true Protestant." The clown, Grimaldi the Elder, secured protection by inscribing on his house-front "No Religion." "I am decking myself," wrote the incorrigible jester Walpole, "with blue ribbons like a May-day garland." No business was done at the general quarterly meeting of the Incorporated Society of Artists "on account of the dreadful riots this day." Flint-locks for self-defence were served out to the clerks at the Old Leather Bottell Bank in Fleet Street, and these are still preserved by Messrs. C. Hoare & Co. "What would you think of the system of self-preservation," writes George Cumberland, under-secretary of the Royal Exchange Assurance Company, to his brother,

"which I am ashamed to say sways public bodies if I was to tell you that Lord Stormont sent some printed papers with his compliments to our Governors, requesting that they might be distributed during these tumults, and that instead of so doing they were thrown into the fire lest any one should get a sight of them and mark our property in revenge for our having been instrumental in assisting Government. To no one but yourself have I told this. I blush for such people! Perhaps I gained myself no friends by offering to the Committee to distribute them myself."

A violent attack was made in Islington on the country residence of Justice Hyde, whose town-house in St. Martin's Street had been wrecked the previous night. The furniture was torn down and burnt before the house, after which the house itself was pulled down.¹

¹ *The History of the Parish of St. Mary Islington.* By John Nelson, London, 1811, p. 263.

One party destroyed the furniture in the house belonging to Justice Wilmot in Camden Row, Bethnal Green, while another, about the same time, demolished his Police Office in Worship Street.

Three houses in Whitecross Street, and also a Mass house and three adjoining houses in East Street, Rotherhithe, were burnt.

Nearly a hundred rioters were apprehended by a party of soldiers in attempting to fire the cells at Newgate, the only part belonging thereto which escaped the fury of the flames the preceding evening.

Thomas Hornyold, a packer of Coleman Street Buildings, stated in a deposition :

" My house was attacked on Wednesday 7th by two parties of rioters ; the first about 4.30 and the second about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The first party consisted of about 150, as many of whom entered the house as could, but the leaders pushed them out again and ordered the door to be barred. One of the three remaining looked into the books, asking for those that related to Popery, but did not seem to understand those that were shown him.

The second party, consisting of about 20, were under the direction of two persons who entered the house and ordered the remainder to stay at the door. One of these asked for books of Popery, and on looking into several English and French books, chiefly consisting of History, immediately knew what they were. When he had examined as many as he thought proper he told me with an oath his orders were to examine books.¹ I believe he must have been a man of education. His rough behaviour seemed forced. They all went off swearing I had deceived them and would return."

Hornyold was not the only person in Coleman Street interfered with by the mob. At five o'clock

¹ They purported to act by virtue of 3 and 4 Edw. VI. c. 10 (1549), which forbade books of Roman Catholic ritual " Ever to be kept in this realm," a provision it is proposed to repeal by the Roman Catholic Relief Bill now before Parliament (1926).

the house of Mr. Charlton, a Catholic druggist in the same street, was destroyed, the furniture carried away in carts to Moorfields, and there burnt. Charlton's house is one of the few places wantonly destroyed at which Gordon was present. John M'Queen, Gordon's personal servant, swore a long "information" from which the following facts, which explain Gordon's presence, are summarised :

Quitting Alderman Bull's on Tuesday evening Gordon proceeded with M'Q. (who had travelled on the box of the unhorsed carriage) to Mr. Jackson, a linen-draper in the Minories, whose house was thought safer from attacks by Papists (!) than Welbeck Street. They reached Jackson's about nine, and remained there ; at eleven M'Q. returned to Welbeck Street, and Gordon retired to bed. M'Q. reappeared before nine on Wednesday morning. Gordon and M'Q. at about ten drove to Sir Fletcher Norton, where Gordon stayed some twenty minutes. They then proceeded to the Queen's House, where M'Q. was bidden to acquaint a page that Gordon was desirous of an audience [*v. p. 113*]. Gordon remained there about twenty minutes, re-entered the coach, and returned to Mr. Jackson's. Near three Gordon received a message from Alderman Bull that the mob were pulling down a house in Coleman Street, and that if he would go thither he might possibly pacify them. Gordon drove there with M'Q. where he met Alderman Pugh. Soldiers arrived at the same time. The officer called for silence and addressed the mob, telling them Lord George Gordon was present and waiting to speak

to them. Gordon desired them to disperse. As soon as the mob appreciated that Gordon was among them there arose a huzzaing and hollooing "Gordon for ever!" and so pressing became the crowd that it was with great difficulty that Gordon and Alderman Pugh regained the coach. Whilst sitting there a young man forced his way to the coach, handed Gordon a paper saying his house was threatened, and desired Gordon to sign it as a protection [v. p. 118]. This done Gordon, Pugh and M'Queen returned to Mr. Jackson's.

No one can read M'Queen's "information" without feeling that he should have been more closely questioned, but it nevertheless affords evidence that Gordon, Bull and Pugh kept well in touch. Alderman Bull's application to Gordon to assist in pacifying the Coleman Street disturbers will be better understood after the perusal of extracts from a second letter written by John Drummond to Lord Stormont. It is dated 12th June, but it refers to events of prime importance enacted a few days earlier :

" Since I had the honour of writing to your Lordship last week I have continued to be as attentive and active as possible for restoring peace and order by mixing with the people. . . . I must do many of the citizens of London the justice to say that they have acted with vigour and spirit notwithstanding the great number of villainous incendiaries which are dispersed amongst them under the denomination of 'Moderate Men,' but in truth hypocritical traitors. A Mr. Thorp, of the Globe Tavern, Fleet Street, is amongst the first who deserve every praise from Government due to a spirited loyal subject. He it was who first took my hint of uniting with his neighbours to meet in the vestry of St. Bride's and patrol the streets in defence of themselves and

property. This society began forming the night of the firing the Fleet Prison [*v. supra*], in defiance of a number of opposers under the term 'Moderate Men.' And I may truly observe that from Mr. Thorp's example the spirit of union spread throughout the city.

Mr. Alderman Wilkes, however moderate before, upon my appearance with Mr. Thorp, began to grow active and take up the lesson of loyalty. I must here remark, my Lord, that I have an opinion respecting the sudden change of activity which I beheld amongst the patriotic Aldermen in favour of order after the conflagration of Newgate, the Fleet Prison and King's Bench which I cannot commit to writing, but will when convenient speak it to your Lordship. There are, I am persuaded, many of those who were active in spiriting up the mob to commit devastation that now have changed sides. My attention to them from the first day of their meeting to this hour afforded every opportunity of marking the true designs of some who now are loud and noisy in favour of Government."

This letter sheds light on a cryptic utterance of Erskine :

" Mr. Wilkes is a gentleman who when called upon to co-operate for preserving the peace of the city said he must look to his own ward [Farringdon Without] which he protected so well that the Prisons of Newgate and the Fleet and Mr. Langdale's house [*v. infra*] were destroyed by the rabble. I have a considerable respect for Mr. Wilkes, but I believe he possesses more experience in raising than dispersing multitudes." ¹

As the result of Wedderburn's advice the following Proclamation was issued, and the next day's newspapers gave it the widest publication :

" GEORGE R. Whereas a great number of disorderly persons have assembled themselves together in a riotous and tumultuous manner, and have been guilty of many acts of treason and rebellion, having made an assault on the goal of Newgate, set loose the prisoners confined therein, and set fire to and destroyed the said prison ; and whereas houses

¹ *Rex v. Kennett*, p. 292.

are now pulling down in several parts of our cities of London and Westminster, and liberties thereof, and fires kindled for consuming the materials and furniture of the same, whereby it has become absolutely necessary to use the most effectual means to quiet such disturbances, to preserve the lives and properties of individuals and to restore the peace of the country : we therefore taking the same into our most serious consideration, have thought fit, by and with the advice of our Privy Council, to issue this royal proclamation, hereby strictly charging and exhorting all our loving subjects to preserve the peace, and to keep themselves, their servants and apprentices, quietly within their respective dwellings, to the end that all well disposed persons may avoid those mischiefs which the continuance of such riotous proceedings may bring upon the guilty. And as it is necessary, from the circumstances before-mentioned, to employ the military force, with which we are by law intrusted, for the immediate suppression of such rebellious and traitorous attempts, now making against the peace and dignity of our crown, and the safety of the lives and properties of our subjects, we have therefore issued the most direct and effectual orders to all our officers, by an immediate exertion of their utmost force, to repress the same, of which all persons are to take notice.

Given at our Court at St. James's, etc."

Lord Stormont forthwith wrote to the Lord Mayor :

" I have His Majesty's commands to send your Lordship immediately, without waiting till it can be printed, an authentick copy of a Proclamation signed by His Majesty in Council this afternoon. Your Lordship will no doubt think it necessary to publish this Proclamation throughout the city of London in the earliest and most effectual manner."

The reception of the official charged with this communication is disclosed in a letter, hitherto unpublished, written on the 8th by George Cumberland to his brother :

" The House adjourned yesterday and the Common Council sat. The House in order to prevent the discussion

of the subject till the Riots ceased, the Council of the City to increase the Riots. They agreed to petition the King to comply with the mobs' demands [v. p. 120], and when the messenger came to tell them that Military Law was established by order of the Privy Council, Mr. Wilkes moved that he be committed. Nobody was so mad as to second him."¹

This astounding incident occurred at a Common Council at six. At seven the Council were notified to meet Colonel Twistedon at the Guildhall to receive the orders of Sir William Amherst, the Adjutant General. Between the two meetings Wilkes quickly turned his coat. It was borne in upon him that the City's efforts to baulk the Government had succeeded too well ; that the mobs whom, so far from discountenancing, they viewed as effective weapons to aid the Petitioners in forcing the hands of a Ministry too long in office,² had during the past day played their own game at the expense of the Protestants. He realised from the Proclamation that the numerous troops, who for forty-eight hours had stood inactive, were now marching into their midst with stern duties to perform ; and maybe speculated on the Privy Council's action when informed that their trusted messenger had been threatened with imprisonment.

Wilkes had backed the wrong horse, but the race was not run to the finish, and there was yet time to support the winning one. Was Wilkes a man likely, by nature, to turn a complete *volte-face* ?

¹ Brit. Mus. Egerton MSS.

² " Too long in office " is perhaps an insufficient expression in face of Fox's declaration in the House a few days later " that on the whole he was of opinion that the wickedness of the rioters exceeded the wickedness of the administration."

Let us peer a moment into the past. On 31st May the Common Council passed a resolution (*v. p.* 26), urging the members for the City to support a repeal of the Relief Act, although Wilkes had previously said in the House : “ I think it would do honour to our Church to treat with tenderness all those who are unhappy enough not to be in her bosom. I admire the temper with which the late indulgences to the Roman Catholics were received.”¹

Another incident in his past is told by his biographer Mr. Horace Bleackley :

“ True to his reputation Wilkes began his term of office as Sheriff with a bid for popular applause. In a letter to Mr. Akerman, the governor of Newgate, he announced that the galleries of the Old Bailey would be flung open to the public, and fees for admission abolished. The new regulations were hailed with delight by the criminal classes. At the next sessions the Court-house was besieged by a ragged mob who fought tooth and nail to gain possession of the privileged places. All day disorder reigned. Mr. Justice Gould declared from the bench that he had never seen so much irregularity in a court of justice in his life. Perceiving he had made a mistake, Wilkes was much too shrewd to repeat it. Before next gaol-delivery he had modified his plans, and the public ceased to be admitted indiscriminately. With a clever attempt to palliate his error he protested that Horne and his friends had hired the mob that had caused all the trouble.”

One more example though not wholly in the past. On 28th September, 1772, Wilkes in an address to certain electors pleaded “ for a revision of those laws which inflict capital punishments for many inferior crimes where mercy too seldom heals the rigour of justice.” Yet thirteen years later Wilkes dumb-founded Sir Samuel Romilly at his tergiver-

¹ *Parl. Hist.* xx. 245.

sation by arguing "that as the spectacle of capital punishment tended to make the spectators both brave and humane it was better the severities of the criminal law should continue."

An opportunist of the first water, Wilkes became an ardent supporter of the Government, and to the last page of this history he will play his rôle as resolutely as he had played the demagogue. "Jack Wilkes," exclaimed Johnson ironically, "who was always zealous for order and decency, declares that if he be trusted with power he will not leave a rioter alive."¹ But the letters of George Cumberland and of John Drummond raise a dark and irresistible presumption that the City Aldermen Wilkes, Kennett Bull,² Pugh, Sawbridge and others were little disposed to check disturbances, with which they unquestionably sympathised, until terror supervened.

West end magistrates failed to act from fear, City magistrates from favour. "Martial law is proclaimed," writes Thoroton to the Duke of Rutland, "as the City magistrates do not dare to do their duty. This will be a horrid night, as the soldiers are to act with vigor. This country never saw such a time, and no one can tell what the next twenty-four hours may produce. There are as many melancholy faces as were on Black Friday.³ Indeed there is the utmost danger." While the City fathers were being plainly told by Col. Twistleton that the protection

¹ Birkbeck Hill's edition of Boswell's *Johnson*, 1887, iii. 430.

² "Bull," says Wraxall, "crouched under Lord George's mob" to the end.

³ A reference to Friday, 6th December, 1745, when news reached London that the forces of the young Pretender had marched into Derby.



XX. The Environs of Holborn, Barnard's Inn and Fetter Lane, 1746

of the City is taken over by the War Office, and that their services are requisitioned, there commenced that attack on the Holborn Distilleries which was to prove the most ghastly spectacle of these convulsed and distracted times. For more than a century there had stood on the south side of Holborn, at the north-west corner of Fetter Lane, a famous hostelry, the Black Swan. Barnard's Inn (of Law) lay on its west and south sides. By 1770 the Black Swan had been converted into a distillery owned by Thomas Langdale & Co.¹ For the purposes of their large business the Langdales occupied additional houses a little eastward, nigh unto St. Andrew's Church. During the previous day and all the morning Langdale, whose anxiety was augmented in that he had recently laid in enormous stocks against the imposition of new duties, had striven to appease the minatory rioters by distributing money and liquor. But he had been selected for their blind vengeance, and so soon as the light began to fade the mob rushed to the Black Swan site, where Mr. Langdale with his twelve children resided, to initiate a most appalling picture of devastation. By nine the buildings were enveloped in smoke and flame, while there flowed down the kennel of the street torrents of unrectified and flaming spirit gushing from casks drawn in endless succession from the vaults. Men and children, followed by women with infants in arms, emerged from courts, lanes and alleys and hastened to the latest outrage. From the windows

¹ The present premises are now in the occupation of Messrs. John Buchanan & Co., Ltd., whisky distillers.

of burning houses men tossed furniture into the all-devouring flames below. Ardent spirits, now running to pools and wholly unfit for human consumption, were swallowed by insatiate fiends, who, with shrieking gibes and curses, reeled and perished in the flames, whilst others, alight from head to foot, were dragged from burning cellars. On a sudden, in an atmosphere hot to suffocation, flames leapt upwards from Langdale's other houses on Holborn Hill. The vats had ignited, and columns of fire became visible for thirty miles round London !

The two distilleries yielded 120,000 gallons of spirit for consumption.¹

Wraxall, who buffeted his way through the heaving crowd, records the spectacle that met his eyes as he reached the declivity of the hill :

" The other magazines of Mr. Langdale situated in the hollow, near the north end of Fleet Market, threw into the air a pinnacle of flame resembling a volcano. Such was the brilliant effect of the illumination that St. Andrew's Church appeared to be almost scorched by the heat of so prodigious a body of fire ; and the figures on the clock were as distinctly perceptible as at noon-day. The wind did not augment its rage for the night was serene, and the sky unclouded, except when it became obscured by the volumes of smoke which from time to time produced a temporary darkness. The mob completely blocked up the whole street in every part and in all directions. Troops, either horse or foot, we still saw none. While we stood by the wall of St. Andrew's Churchyard a watchman, with his lanthorn, passed us calling the hour as if in a time of profound tranquillity."

The fire at the Black Swan site consumed eight houses backwards from the Holborn frontage, and was only stayed by an intervening stable yard.

¹ *Political Magazine*, 1780, p. 441.

Dyers' Buildings, a cul-de-sac which still exists, was much injured. Wild, the High Constable for Holborn, was terribly cut in the head by the mob, and his silver mace stolen from him. The Rev. B. Allen was forcibly held opposite Langdale's between eight and nine o'clock by a gang of pickpockets who relieved him of a gold watch, purse, keys and other articles. After turning his pockets inside out, a person, decently dressed, who had held his cane "returned it very civilly." During the conflagration a single fellow, with cockade and bludgeon, demanded money for his gang in Bedford Row and adjacent streets, threatening those who made the least hesitation. A man (afterwards identified) encouraged the mob from the windows of Seagoe's Coffee-house adjoining Langdale's and distributed money among them. When the flames began to threaten the whole neighbourhood some of the rioters permitted two fire-engines to play, but (unknown to the firemen) the wells yielded spirit and not water. When the engines were put into action they added but another terror to the scene.

These deeds of rapine and plunder proceeded unchecked while men, women and children ran up and down carrying as many goods as they could preserve. At last the Northumberland Militia reached London by a forced march of twenty-five miles, and were led into the thick of the tumult by Colonel Holroyd. "Colonel Holroyd," records Gibbon, "was all last night in Holborn among the flames with the Northumberland Militia, and performed very bold and able service." The troops at

last terrified the crowds into dispersing, whilst detachments of Regulars and Militia came pouring into the Metropolis.

The Rev. John Warner, writing from Barnard's Inn the next day, tells George Selwyn :

" The staircase in which my chambers are not yet burnt down, but it could not be much worse for me if it were. I fear there are many scores of poor creatures who have suffered this night much more than I have. There can be no living here even if the fire stops immediately, for the whole place is a wreck. . . . There is one circumstance which distresses me more than anything : I have lost my maid, who was a very worthy creature, and I am sure would never have deserted me in such a situation by her own will ; and what can have become of her is horrible to think. . . . Six o'clock. The fire is nearly stopped, though only at the next door to me. But no maid appears. When I shall overcome the horror of the night I cannot guess." ¹

An "antient" of this Inn, writing in 1852, preserved some interesting details :

" The portion of Barnard's Inn burnt down in the Riots were the sets of chambers now numbered 6 and 7.² That the Hall should have escaped destruction in the mighty conflagration all around and touching its very walls is marvellous. I have heard my father describe the horror and confusion of the attack upon the distillery. He went himself into Barnard's Inn the second day after the fire, where he saw a sturdy fellow at the pump pumping up not the pure water now (1852) flowing from this excellent spring, but gin which he doled out for a penny a mug to the crowd of miscreants. . . . It was several weeks before the water was restored to its native purity untainted with spirit."

This finds confirmation in the *Public Advertiser* for 20th June, 1780 : " For several days after the fire at Mr. Langdale's the Pump at Barnard's Inn yielded nothing but spirits."

¹ Jesses' *Selwyn*, iv. 327-35.

² Twenty-two sets were burned ; 6 and 7 probably refer to staircases.

Robert Smith, who visited the site on Thursday morning, stood aghast before the burnt-out distillery, and the spectacle of wretches lying roasted to death in blazing rum and gin. Many lay buried in the ruins of fallen houses, as workmen clearing the ground discovered later. Hundreds of iron hoops that had bound the staves of the casks lay piled in the road-way.

A letter to Lord Amherst contained an important tactical suggestion :

“ 7th June, 1780. It is recommended to your Lordship to secure the Surrey ends of London and Black Fryars bridges directly, as Southwark is particularly threatened. Securing these two passes would effectually prevent the junction of the Mobs. If the mobs are possessed of the Artillery Arms it will be necessary to have upon each Bridge end two 4-inch Howitzers with grape shot. I submit this from Col. Onslow, who is of opinion that 400 men would defend the two bridges. The Tower Ditch should as soon as possible be filled with water. I am, etc.

HILLSBOROUGH.”

Trouble was indeed beginning on the Surrey side, for another set of insurgents having released those confined in the King’s Bench Prison, near the Obelisk, had fired it. Five persons smoking and drinking on the top of the prison, while the lower part was alight, perforce jumped for their lives ; they were all received on blankets held out by people below. The furniture of the prison offices was burnt before the doors. “ Last night,” said the *Morning Chronicle*, “ about eight o’clock the King’s Bench prison was discovered to be on fire, and continued burning furiously when this paper went to press.”

The restless Angelo was afoot again. On his way to Charing Cross he learned that the Park, facing the Horse Guards, was full of soldiers. Captain Boswell, a friend whom he met, took him inside.

"A black smoke made its appearance passing towards us. The news soon spread that the King's Bench was on fire, and though all seemed to credit it, not a soldier stirred, they waited for orders whilst the officers were busy in conversation. I soon hurried away, and arrived near the Obelisk. On seeing the flame and smoke along the high wall it appeared to me like the huge hulk of a dismasted man-of-war on fire. Here with amazement I stood sometime gazing on the spot. . . . That night I recollect it was said that six and thirty fires might be seen blazing from London Bridge."

Wraxall also contributes his quota :

"We were informed that a considerable number of rioters had been killed on Blackfriars Bridge, which was occupied by troops. On approaching it we beheld the King's Bench Prison completely wrapped in flames. It exhibited a sublime sight—we stood at a central point from whence London offered on every side, before as well as behind us, the picture of a city sacked and abandoned to a ferocious enemy. The shouts of the populace, the cries of women, the crackling of the fires, the blaze reflected in the stream of the Thames, and the irregular firing which was kept up both in St. George's Fields, as well as towards the quarter of the Mansion House and the Bank ;—all these combined left scarcely anything for the imagination to supply ; presenting to the view every recollection which the classic descriptions in Virgil, or in Tacitus, have impressed on the mind in youth, but which I so little expected to see exemplified in the capital of Great Britain."

From the King's Bench Prison a body of the mob hastened to the Fleet Prison, the denizens whereof had now completed the removal of their chattels, and fired that building.

"Hearing that the Fleet Prison had been set on fire," continues Wraxall, "we penetrated through a number of

narrow lanes behind St. Andrew's Church and presently found ourselves in the middle of Fleet Market. Here the same destruction raged, but in a different stage of its progress. Mr. Langdale's houses were already at the height of their demolition : the Fleet Prison on the contrary was only beginning to blaze, and the flaming particles that filled the air, fell so thick upon us on every side, as to render unsafe its immediate vicinity."

Brasbridge the silversmith mounted to the top of St. Bride's steeple to view "the awful spectacle of the conflagration of the Fleet Prison, but the flakes of fire, even at that great height, fell so thickly as to render the situation untenable." An engine from the Royal Exchange Company¹ was sent to endeavour to quell the fire, but it was immediately committed to the flames, and the firemen had to make a precipitate retreat. While the Prison was burning coaches passing by Fleet Market were stopped, and demands for money were made upon the passengers. The Duke of Gloucester, the King's brother, who went disguised in a hackney-coach, was held up in the Market and plundered.

Some little light on the methods pursued by the incendiaries is obtainable from the "informations" sworn by witnesses. One witness, George Sussex, a cabinet maker and a prisoner for debt in the Fleet Prison, says he observed a man in the gallery of the Prison pouring a liquid out of a bottle upon the floor from door to door of the several rooms in the gallery ; at the same time he saw another man with a lighted torch set fire to the liquid. In about two minutes the gallery was on fire from end to end.

¹ The only regular fire-engines of eighteenth century London were those owned and worked by the Fire Insurance Companies.

He noticed that the man who had the lighted torch and set fire to the liquid was dressed in a blue sailor's jacket.

The fire fiends, augmented by the prisoners they had assisted to escape, now rushed to the Borough Clink in Deadman's Place, Bankside, set the doors open and destroyed it. This prison was never rebuilt.

The toll of a halfpenny charged to all who crossed Blackfriars Bridge had long been a source of grievance to the populace. The present upheaval was opportune for demonstrating their disapproval. Flames were carried from Fleet Prison to the toll-gatherers' houses. These were fired and soon reduced to ashes, large stocks of halfpence being first confiscated by the mob. The troops did execution at this point, for Wraxall states that many of the rioters who fell at Blackfriars Bridge, or in its vicinity, where the slaughter was most considerable, were thrown into the Thames by their companions.

Wrote Patrick Brydone :

" Sir J. Wrottesley marched across St. George's Fields, passed the King's Bench in flames, and attacked near the river a large body of rioters. They were not in the least afraid ; having persuaded themselves that the soldiers would not fire on them. On the first discharge they dispersed, and he chased them with bayonets, which completed the rout. Many of them had loaded a boat with powder, and were going off ; he fired on them, and killed the greatest part ; the rest leaped into the water and mud, and were stifled. Col. Leake, who commanded the other party, marched to the Fleet where they were very riotous. Possessed with the same infatuation they would not stir till the bayonets touched them. He charged them and they were immediately dispersed, leaving, he thought, upwards of a 100 killed."



Col. Leake then appears to have gone into Holborn, where he found the Northumberland Militia drawn up before Mr. Langdale's house.

Lady Anne Erskine's fears for Spa Fields Chapel were revived :

"The fires in Holborn blazed before us," she continues to Lord Buchan, "even more terribly than those of Tuesday. The mob were in our neighbourhood again, and we expected them as before (*v. p. 107*). The military in Holborn firing upon the rioters made this night more terrible even than the night before."

The Moravians in Nevill's Court were again molested.

"The threatenings against our chapel," says Hutton, "and the houses about it becoming more frequent, we were necessitated to secure our valuable writings in places of greater safety. Some of the single sisters went this afternoon to Chelsea, others to Islington. One brother living a few doors from our chapel in removing some goods of great value met with a very considerable loss. It was found advisable to let the rioters convince themselves by what they might see of our not being Roman Catholics. . . . The night exhibited the most shocking spectacle. The flames ascending and rolling over our heads in vast volumes from the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons and New Bridewell, from the toll-gates at Blackfriars Bridge and from houses in every quarter of the town, presented a scene horrible beyond the power of description. Four places very near us, besides our chapel, were threatened to be set on fire. The violent burning of the houses of an eminent distiller in Holborn and at Fetter Lane, which contained vast quantities of spirituous liquors, brought the danger nearer. There was very little wind, the nights were almost the shortest in the year and the weather very fine. A number of people, most of whom seemed to be rioters, in blue cockades, assembled about 10 o'clock before the gate of our chapel, knocking against it with great violence. The gate being opened not one attempted to come in and they soon dispersed. Our neighbours in Fetter Lane who could not comprehend why we should be considered Roman Catholics, showed their

friendship and regard for us ; but now, that the mob had left us, supposing our chapel to be the safest place in the street, they carried their furniture, plate and other goods into it.”¹

Such Londoners as were not cowed were unnerved. It was the natural result of successive sleepless nights, of realising that fanaticism was replaced by outrage in its most naked form, of widespread plunder committed by desperate men who had compromised themselves beyond return, of the consciousness that the worst criminals and most abandoned villains were at large, of the paralysis of the magistracy, of the apparent inadequacy of the military, of the warnings, expressed in no mistakeable manner, that the Bank, the rest of the prisons, the Royal Palaces, the Arsenal, the Inns of Court, were to be served as Newgate had been served, coupled with the fiendish rumour, recorded by Walpole, that the lunatics in Bethlem and the lions at the Tower were to be let loose.

Of Bethlem, its historian, the Rev. Mr. O'Donoghue, tells us that “the glare of the writhing flames blazed in the glass of the hospital windows, and while some of the patients danced with glee, others shrieked as if they were already ascending their own funeral pyres.”

Let us pass towards the heart of the City, which as the light began to fail, and expectation of the rioters increased, became unwontedly silent and deserted. But the hours of daylight had not been passed idly. Warehouses, offices, shops were all closely barred. Sailors, carried by lighters from

¹ On 1st March, 1710, during the Sacheverell Riots, the mob had gutted the chapel by fire.

Deptford, had brought hempen cables, and these they drew across Cheapside and Cornhill, deftly affixing them to the stout posts that edged the pavements. Thirty-six rounds of ammunition were served out to every soldier.

About sunset the insurgents made their appearance. The barriers in Cheapside were effective, forcing them to break into small detachments. While the mob struggled along the pavement in their race for the Poultry the military fired. At the first discharge some twenty people fell, innocent persons among them. The bodies were dragged into St. Mildred's Church.¹ Robert Smith, who watched the tumult and listened to the drunken curses of the mob from the south-west corner of Old Jewry, was well-nigh a victim. One musket-ball lodged in the door-post of the house behind him within a few inches of his right shoulder, while another, passing between his legs, shattered the brickwork against his calves. He fled down Old Jewry, only to find the rioters taking the same course. Balls whistled past him before he could turn into Frederick's Place where he lived. He escaped untouched, as did the rioters, but two innocent men suffered. A clerk, sent to Schumaker and Hayman's counting-house, was shot through the heart as he was returning, and a man crossing Old Jewry from Dove Court with a plate of oysters received a bullet through the wrist.

The attack on the Bank of England was made between eleven and twelve at night. A brewer's

¹ A Wren structure since demolished, and its monuments removed to St. Olave's.

drayman, bestriding a horse caparisoned with chains filched from Newgate, led the most daring party. Colonel Holroyd, hot from his triumph in Holborn, and with such troops as could now be spared from that quarter, was ordered to the scene.

"To Colonel Holroyd, since deservedly raised to the British Peerage as Lord Sheffield, and to his regiment of Militia," says Wraxall, "the country was eminently indebted for repelling the fury of the mob at the Bank, where during some moments the conflict seemed doubtful, and the assailants had nearly forced an entrance. Lord Algernon Percy, now Earl of Beverley, marched likewise at the head of the Northumberland Militia to the same spot. Their arrival, together with the energy, promptitude and decision which Col. Holroyd manifested, principally conduced to ensure its safety."¹

Wilkes, as a Buckinghamshire Militiaman (he had been M.P. for Aylesbury), took some part in the Bank's defence, and entered in his *Diary*:

" Fired 6 or 7 times on the rioters at the end of the Bank towards Austin Friars, and towards the middle of the Bank. Killed two rioters directly opposite to the great gate of the Bank ; several others in Pig Street [v. Plate XXIV.] and Cheapside "

Inside the Bank it is recorded that "the old inkstands were cast into bullets ; a strong force was placed within, while the military awaited the mob's arrival without the walls. The officers of the establishment were called upon to assist, and another force was placed on the roof to fire upon the assailants if they entered."²

"The late Lord Rodney [son of the Admiral] told me," says Wraxall, "that having been sent to the defence of the

¹ Holroyd was not a soldier only ; he was regarded as one of the highest authorities on English agriculture of his day.

² J. Francis, *History of the Bank of England*, 1848, i. 183.



Lord

Sheffield

Bank, at the head of a detachment of his regiment, he there found Gordon, who appeared anxiously endeavouring to induce the populace to retire. As soon as Lord George saw Captain Rodney, he expressed his concern at the acts of violence committed ; adding, that he was ready to take his stand by Captain Rodney's side and to expose his person to the utmost risk to resist such proceedings. Rodney, who distrusted his sincerity, declined any communication with him. But whatever might be Lord George's inclination he was altogether destitute of the power. The military force alone saved the Bank from being plundered, and prevented the temporary subversion of the national credit."

At midnight the Bank authorities felt justified in advising Lord Stormont of their safety :

" Bank, 7th June, 12 o'clock at night.

The Governor, Deputy Governor and Gentlemen of the Bank have the honour to acquaint Lord Stormont that by the assistance and very attentive conduct of the Force which his Lordship was pleased to order for the service of that important object, they are at present safe and hope to continue so. Some attempts however have been made which have caused the loss of some lives, of which two fell just opposite to the Bank. Fires and Riots have happened and still continue in many parts of the neighbourhood which the present Force is not sufficient to prevent."

During the onslaught at the Bank a section of the mob thought to show their resentment to Alderman Harley,¹ and their unexpected discomfiture makes pleasant reading.

" A fine contrast to the pusillanimous and temporising conduct of Kennett," says Brasbridge, " was afforded by the lion-like intrepidity of the Rt. Hon. Thomas Harley when a large mob had assembled opposite the Mansion House. Rushing into the thickest of the throng, his piercing eye instantly detected one of the ringleaders, and his vigorous arm as promptly seized the offender and dragged him into the Mansion House. This courageous act, which I wit-

¹ Harley was Lord Mayor in 1767, when he had personal and rough experience of Wilkes's mobs.

nessed myself, awed the insurgents. . . . The mob in revenge for his spirited conduct determined to attack Harley's house (afterwards the Albion in Aldersgate Street), but his neighbour Mr. Seddons, an upholsterer, hearing of their design and having a hundred men in his employment, sent them all out, disguised with cockades, against the enemy, who soon took to flight when they saw the resolution they had to oppose."

It is said George III. entertained a high opinion of Harley for his determination.

Despite the influx of regiments, a shortage of troops, owing to depletion by the numbers serving in, or sailing for America, was experienced. An attempt to remedy the inadequacy of the Crown Forces induced the London Military Association to make a tender of their services. The offer was made to the Lord Mayor at four o'clock this afternoon, and soon after seven they were under arms and in the same duty with the Regulars.¹ One who was a volunteer has left a record of the Association's activity.²

" So long as the mischief was confined to a few empty chapels, people did not mind it, but when Newgate was forced open and fired, the question was no longer one merely of religion. . . . I had a share in settling this business. . . . first protecting the Mansion House, then marching to such other parts of the City as were actually attacked. Before four in the morning we had secured the rioters in the house of Mr. Donovan in Broad Street and saved the house of his neighbour, Mr. Gorman, from the ruin to which it had been devoted, though not without the painful necessity of committing some execution. I continued four nights more upon my legs in the streets, without intermission, besides many other nights at intervals, during a month afterwards. The first night's service exhibited an awful

¹ Probably on Colonel Twistedon's insistence when interviewing the Aldermen at Guildhall, *v. p. 128.*

² Brit. Mus. MSS. 27828, f. 127.

but beautiful scene. Figure to yourself every man, woman and child in the streets, panic-struck, the atmosphere red as blood with the ascending fires, muskets firing in every part, and consequently women and children lying sprawling in the streets ; all the lower order of people stark mad with liquor, huzzaing and parading with flags. Our corps assembled at a tavern in Guildhall, about eight in the evening ; from thence we proceeded in files through the multitude (who hissed us all the way) to the Mansion House. The King's Guards took possession of all the streets, facing every way, and suffering no body to remain within except our corps, which covered them, and the civil and military officers. We had not been in this position above ten minutes before mobs approached us down Cheapside, and were fired upon. Soon after another mob came towards the Bank and were also fired upon. Within the lines all was perfectly still and silent, but on all sides without the air was rent with huzzas. The mob consisting of thieves of every species, had some pistols which were fired, but had no inclination to stay when they felt the musket balls among them. The business was soon settled near the Bank, but the populace fell upon lesser game. Private houses in different parts of the neighbourhood were begun to be ransacked, and the inhabitants came to the Mansion House begging protection. The King's troops could not move from their positions near the Bank, therefore it fell to the lot of part of our corps to march to Broad Street where was a large mob ransacking a house, and burning the furniture in the street. They would not disperse, and bid us fire and be damned. There was soon exhibited a scene of killed, wounded and dying. We were very merciful to them, by firing only one gun at once, instead of a volley, thereby giving time to many to get off. This business being settled and the fire put out we proceeded and did the same at another fire. We were very busy all night after at different places. From that night all rioting ceased in the city. The following night the King's troops rested under arms in the Bank¹ and the Exchange, and the Association took their former post. We had little to do except to patrole

¹ Ever since the Gordon Riots the Bank of England has been nightly guarded by soldiers. A detachment proceeding along the Embankment towards the Bank in the late afternoon is a familiar sight to Londoners. See *Times*, 28th July, 1922, p. 15, "The Real Bank of England."

the streets and enter houses in the dead of night to apprehend objects of public justice."

Mrs. Samuel Hoare continuing her note to her mother of the previous day (cf. p. 121):

"I had not finished my letter last night half an hour when all was in confusion. The mob attacked a house in Cushion Court but were kept off by the Guards. They then rushed forward to another at the end of Wormwood Street which they entered and stripped of everything, throwing the goods into the street, and setting them on fire on a large pile, which they kept constantly increasing. . . . Think how much the horror of this scene was heightened when a large party of the Horse Guards, attended by a company of volunteers, arrived. They halted exactly opposite our house. Three times the commanding officer exhorted the people to disperse, but they obstinately refused. Then advancing but a few paces, they fired near a hundred pieces, and left four unhappy men dead on the spot, and fifteen wounded. At the time this shocking affair happened the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons were both on fire, and burning with great fury, and another house in Houndsditch was in flames, so that from our windows we beheld four dreadful conflagrations at one time."

Francis Wheatley, R.A., painted a picture of "The Riots in Broad Street on the 7th June 1780," which survives only in the engraving of James Heath (*v. Frontispiece*). It is dedicated to the London Light Horse Volunteers and to the Military Foot Association. The painting was destroyed in a fire at Heath's house in Lisle Street, Leicester Fields, in 1789. It represents a view of Old Broad Street looking southwards, and taken at the point where London Wall joins it. The street opening out of Broad Street on the left is Wormwood Street; the higher building in the distance is the Excise Office. Tradition has it that the officer represented as the

figure giving orders to the troops is Sir Bernard Turner, and that he who receives orders is Henry Smith, one of the Bank Directors and Major Commandant of the Camberwell Volunteers. The figure stooping over a wounded man is that of Sir William Blizzard, surgeon to the London Hospital 1780-1833, who then served in the corps. The person in Quaker-like costume in the foreground endeavouring to restrain a rioter is said to be Samuel Hoare (*v. p. 41*).

As one studies the print of Wheatley's picture, where a dray-horse suggests the one caparisoned with fetters that careered so prominently at the Bank, the attitude of mind engendered in Brasbridge becomes understandable, and is no repellent jingoism :

" I was induced to join a military corps for the purpose of suppressing the riots of 1780. . . . After being kept several days in extreme peril I could not but regard as our preservers the bands of militia which marched into the city, with firm step and undaunted mien, to extend that protection over it which its inhabitants had not the resolution to secure for themselves. From that moment, though previously contaminated with the mania infected by Wilkes the political mountebank of the day, I shut my ears against the voice of popular clamour."

Dr. Burney described the prevailing dismay to Mr. T. Twining :

" This night six dreadful fires raged in the same instant, that of the Distillery surpassed the appearance of Mount Vesuvius in all its fury. . . . Everyone moved his papers and most valuable effects to the dwelling of some friend whose situation was equally dangerous. . . . I removed to the house of a friend valuable books and MSS. which had been lent me, and a coachful of MSS. I had collected for my History of Music in France, Italy and Germany I sent to

Mr. Burney¹ in Tavistock Street, supposing him in a quiet part of the town and intending to send more, but a second load was brought back as likely to be safer in my own house, there being a riot in his street, and a banditti levying money at pleasure on the inhabitants."

The rioters apparently knocked at the doors with great fury and demanded money for the benefit of the prisoners released from Newgate. The next morning Susan Burney called on her aunts in York Street, Covent Garden, to see how they fared :

" I found them terrified to death. The rioters had been in their street the preceding night to levy contributions. By accident they passed by my aunts' door, but afterwards somebody marked an O upon it, which it seems the rioters did on the doors of all persons who did not give sufficient money to satisfy them, and where they might take measures to be revenged."

In Long Acre the mob in small parties exacted contributions from every house, alleging to one that it was for burying the men killed, to another that it was for the honour of religion.²

The houses intended to be attacked had each a mark set upon them. Such a mark was affixed to the premises of Mr. M'Ewan, an Italian warehouseman in Fenchurch Street. His wife was a Catholic ; he was a Protestant, and a resolute one. He procured a crow-bar and gave out that as soon as the rioters appeared he would force down the parapet and bring it about their heads. The threat deterred the mob, and his house escaped injury.³

In the late afternoon Downing Square, through which there was then no outlet, became thronged

¹ His son-in-law, Charles Rousseau Burney.

² M.P. 9th June. ³ Dolman, vi. 168.

with people who manifested a determination to proceed to acts of outrage at Lord North's. When the mob learned that more than twenty Grenadiers, well armed and ready on the first order to fire on them, were stationed above stairs they held back although they did not depart. Night coming on, Lord North, accompanied by Sir John Macpherson, Mr. Eden, Gen. Simon Fraser and Colonel North, who had dined with him, mounted to the top of the house, where they beheld London blazing in seven places, and heard the platoons firing regularly in many directions. "What is your opinion of the remedy for this evil?" asked Lord North of Macpherson. "I should try, my Lord," answered Sir John, "to effect a junction with the Heads of the Opposition for the protection of the country." "It is not practicable," replied the Premier. Nevertheless, a day or two afterwards, notwithstanding the opinion so expressed by Lord North, he and Charles Fox personally met behind the scenes at the Opera House in the Haymarket at eleven in the forenoon and there held a conference.

Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, assembled his friends, like Lord North, and very efficiently barricaded the passages and entrance to his house in Pall Mall. He then awaited, with much composure, the attack of the populace. But the rioters were too well informed of the precautions taken; and they desisted. The thoroughness of the defensive measures is borne out by a letter from Richard Cumberland to Lord Germain, written from Madrid on 14th August, whither he

had gone on a diplomatic mission to the court of Spain :

" If my son could bring out my instructions I should receive it as a great indulgence. . . . It gave me no small delight to hear that he was upon guard at your house during the tumults. He had been reported sick just before, and then was fourteen nights without going to bed or taking off his boots, and I hear it has shaken his health. Might this not be an honorable plea for leave of absence ? " ¹

When Sir John Hawkins rose on Wednesday morning from Lord Percy's bed at Northumberland House he sought his home circle at Queen Square, Westminster : ²

" Though my father returned in safety at seven," continues Miss Hawkins, " it was to say that from the curate of the parish, who followed him into the room, he had received intelligence that our house was to be demolished at night. Our kind curate added to his friendly warning an offer to take charge of any valuables, and some that were portable he conveyed away. . . . All was activity to prepare for our compulsory departure, which Sir John desired might be effected before sunset, regardless of what remained in the house, the door of which had been marked with the character of destruction, an open-headed figure of eight. One offer of assistance we received from a lady whose stables afforded abundant room for furniture. This encouraged us to attempt saving the best. . . . Our servants exerted themselves vigorously . . . wardrobes were stript, their contents thrown into chests, books were packed in boxes, and by the hour we were to abandon our condemned house, not an article remained but bedsteads and fixtures. The rioters must have had good intelligence, for no attack was made.

We availed ourselves of the benevolence of a family who lived at Clapton. Our party consisted of ten. Some of us were accommodated by those with whom we had taken refuge, and the others were received by their neighbours. But even here the protestant spirit had outgone us ; every-

¹ Stopford-Sackville MSS., 1904, p. 336.

² Queen Anne Mansions now stands on its site.

where we saw blue ribbons hung out at the windows, and our appearance at Clapton gave rise to a supposition that we must be Roman Catholics fled from home. . . . In going to rest a blameable curiosity induced me to open the window shutter that looks towards London. I counted seven fires then blazing ! It was appalling."

Thrale's Brewhouse in the Borough, about which centres so much of interest in the pages of Boswell, was no less attractive to the mob than Langdale's distilleries. Mrs. Thrale's own pen discloses a hazardous situation :

" We were near to ruin in the Borough, where nothing but the astonishing presence of mind shewed by Perkins in amusing the mob with meat and drink and huzzas till Sir Philip Jennings Clerke could get the troops and pack up the counting house bills, bonds, etc., and carry them, which he did, to Chelsea College for safety—could have saved us from actual undoing. The villains had broke in, and our brewhouse would have blazed in ten minutes, when a property of £150,000 would have been utterly lost, and its once flourishing possessors quite undone. . . . I have presented Perkins with two hundred guineas and a silver urn for his lady with his own cypher on it and this motto : ' Mollis responsio Iram averit.' "

Want of troops was now becoming serious :

" Whitehall, $\frac{3}{4}$ past twelve midnight, 7th June, 1780.

Lord Amherst presents his compliments to Mr. Jenkinson ; he has received the note addressed to him from the Dean of the Arches, and the Judge of the Admiralty Court of Doctors Commons. The application is a very proper one, but the detachments already made are so numerous it is impossible to comply with their request. The number, indeed, now left on the Parade will not admit of being further lessened."

" My father," says Reynolds the dramatist, " began to be puzzled as to his opinion of the riots. At first he praised the magistracy for not interfering, but, the havoc spreading far and wide, and not exactly understanding

mob tyranny, on Wednesday June the 7th he put one hundred and fifty guineas in his pocket, and took us all with him to Southbarrow, where after dinner he said if this rabble continued to rule, he would, in a day or two, depart for France. My brother Jack agreed with him . . . until the former unluckily hinted that he thought the cause of the riots had commenced with the cry of ‘Wilkes and Liberty!’ My father¹ felt the rebuke, and rising abruptly from his chair, cried angrily to Jack, ‘Either you or I leave the room.’ ‘I know my duty, sir,’ replied my brother, and walked out humming ‘God Save the King.’ However, at midnight, when we walked on the lawn, and looking towards London, saw by the red appearance of the sky that probably half the metropolis was in flames, and recollecting also that, before our departure, all the prisoners had escaped from Newgate, Clerkenwell and the New Prison to add to the universal horror and confusion, we approached my father, and instead of bantering him on his political tergiversation, thanked him for his kindness and forethought.”

The inadequacy of the troops in point of numbers is corroborated by the remarks made by Sir P. J. Clerke in the House on the 19th June :

“ I gave warning of what was intended in full time for the safety of the King’s Bench and Surrey Bridewell. I went to the King’s Bench in the morning and was told by the marshal, who was then moving his goods, that the Prison was to be burnt that night, and a clerk of Mr. Thrale also told me that their brewery would be burnt that night unless he could procure a guard for its protection. These things I told Lord Amherst and the Secretary at War at 12 o’clock in the forenoon, and yet no guard was sent till 9 o’clock just in time to save Mr. Thrale’s house.”

Mr. Jenkinson, Secretary at War, replied : “ The apprehensions of individuals became so violent that previous to the arrival of the Militia it was impossible to satisfy half the calls that were made.”

Many Roman Catholic families of consequence in Hammersmith removed their effects and left their

¹ A whig attorney who had acted for Chatham and for Wilkes.

several places of residence. The Hammersmith Convent was marked for destruction, but was saved by the mob being told that Queen Elizabeth had been educated there. The nurses were concealed in the houses of tradespeople. The Sacrament was buried in the garden, and the gardener watched it for three days and three nights.

The authorities receiving notice that a large quantity of arms belonging to the Somerset Militia was being offered for sale, they late at night sent skilled workmen to a brazier's in Long Acre, where the arms were reported to be stocked, with instructions either to remove the locks or to render them useless. By three o'clock in the morning (Thursday) 270 locks were brought to the Tower, whence they were removed with the bayonets and lodged at the Horse Guards.

The gravity of the situation is perhaps best realised by the announcement in the next day's papers :

“ Orders were sent down to Admiral Geary to Portsmouth last night to put to sea immediately for fear the enemy should take advantage of our intestine commotions, and attempt to land a body of troops on this Island.”¹

¹ The British Museum has recently been presented with Admiral Geary's Order Book and Letter Book ; they disclose a marked increased activity on the 7th and 8th June.

V

THURSDAY, 8TH JUNE, TO TUESDAY,
13TH JUNE

“ Such a time of terror you have been happy in not seeing.”
—JOHNSON to MRS. THRALE.

IN the early hours of Thursday Lord Amherst wrote to Lord Hillsborough :

“ Whitehall, $\frac{1}{2}$ after 2 a.m. 8th June.
... I wish I could give your Lordship such an account of the Transactions of this night as might gives hopes of these outrageous and rebellious proceedings being entirely finished, but I fear the opportunities have not offered for punishing the guilty as they deserve, but the Reports are not yet come in.”

Lord Amherst’s apprehensions were justified, for, despite the assurances of the Governors, the Bank was not yet immune from attack :

“ This morning between three and four o’clock a large party of the rioters went down Cheapside in order to attack the Bank, several of them armed with muskets. When they got to the Poultry the Horse and Foot Guards were drawn up and stopped them. The rioters fired on the soldiers, and the soldiers returned the fire for several minutes, and killed about eight people and wounded a great many. The mob was so great that they beat off the Horse Guards, but the Foot, by keeping a constant fire, dispersed them.”¹

¹ L.C. 6th-8th June.



XXIII. The Environs of the Bank, Poultry Compter, Cheapside
and Old Jewry, 1746

Directly he had breakfasted on Thursday morning Horace Walpole continued his narrative to the Countess of Ossory :

“ . . . My printer¹ who has been out all night saw many houses set on fire, women and children screaming, running out of doors with what they could save, and knocking one another down with their loads in the confusion. Barnard’s Inn is burnt, and some houses mistaken for Catholic. Kirgate says most of the rioters are apprentices, and plunder and drink their chief objects, and both women and men are still lying dead drunk about the streets. I trust many more troops will arrive to-day. What families ruined ! What wretched wives and mothers ! What public disgrace ! —ay and where and when and how will this confusion end ! and what shall we be when it is concluded ? I remember the Excise² and the Gin Act,³ and the rebels at Derby,⁴ and Wilkes’s interlude,⁵ and the French at Plymouth,⁶ or I should have a very bad memory, but I never till last night saw London and Southwark in flames ! ”

¹ Walpole installed a private printing-press at Strawberry Hill which one Thomas Kirgate superintended.

² In 1733 Sir Robert Walpole brought forward an Excise scheme relating to duties on wine and tobacco. Although the minister might have carried it, so violent was the popular outcry against the measure that when it came on for a second reading he moved it should be postponed for two months, and thus it was dropped.

³ In 1736 an Act to control the evils of the gin trade was passed by Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, which led to riots, the battle cry of the rioters being “ No Gin, No King ! ”

⁴ December 1745.

⁵ “ The riotous spirit which had for some years been growing stronger and stronger in England increased in June 1768 almost to the point of revolution. At the Middlesex election the mob took possession of every avenue and turnpike leading to the place of voting, and would suffer no one to pass who did not wear a blue cockade with the name of Wilkes. The windows of the Mansion House were demolished. . . . The principal opponents of Wilkes were assaulted. The coach-glasses of all who refused to huzza for ‘ Wilkes and Liberty ’ were broken, and even ladies were taken out of their chairs and compelled to join in the popular cry.” Lecky, iii. 131.

⁶ “ In 1778 a combined fleet of sixty-five French and Spanish ships entered the British Channel, insulted unopposed the British coast and might easily have destroyed Plymouth.” Lecky, iv. 494.

The House of Commons assembled on Thursday, but declined to take the Petition of the "loyal" Protestant subjects into consideration :

" Jovis 8 die Junii.

Prayers. Resolved *nem. con.* That this House do now adjourn till Monday sevennight. And the House accordingly adjourned till Monday sevennight, the 19th day of this instant June, 10 of the clock in the morning."

Wrote Walpole scathingly to the Countess of Ossory after dinner :

" It is a moment, Madam, when to be surprised is not surprising. But what will you say to the House of Commons meeting by 12 o'clock to-day and adjourning ere fifty members were arrived, to Monday se'nnight ! So adieu all Government but the sword ! "¹

William Woodfall, the celebrated Parliamentary reporter who, at a time when note-taking was absolutely forbidden in Parliament, was able to reproduce the speeches verbatim from memory, wrote, in the third person, to Lord Stormont :

" Dorset Street, Salisbury Court, 8th June, 1780.

... W. Woodfall's house, according to repeated intelligence, has stood a proscribed house from Tuesday morning, and his family have ever since been in the utmost alarm and disorder, which has been the more dreadful as Mrs. Woodfall is not in a condition which enables her to bear up against the present calamity with that fortitude which the occasion requires.

W. W. encloses Lord Stormont the original copy of an article just sent him by Lord George Gordon. He has caused all of it to be printed for to-morrow's *Morning Chronicle* except that sentence marked between crotches thus [], and that he has omitted because it appears to convey an insinuation tending to mischief and future tumult."

On Thursday morning Dr. Burney walked into the city to view the various scenes of devastation. He

¹ Toynbee, xi. 206.

observed people going in and out of the ruins of Newgate as freely as if walking under the Piazzas in Covent Garden. He visited the Bank, "which," says he, "had been attempted to be broke into three times the preceding evening." Patrick Brydone was also on foot early. He went through the whole city, where he found the consternation universal. Parties of the guards were pulling down the blue flags that were flying from every house, and were tearing the blue cockade from every hat. Many civilians made resistance, but in the end were forced to comply. He found guards placed at the houses of all the Cabinet Ministers, and he ascertained that about 10,000 troops were in London. He observed people in all quarters arming themselves for self-defence, and pertinently remarks "that it may not be so easy to make them disarm." The consternation was indeed so general that persons quitted the metropolis as if to avoid the plague. "You cannot conceive how families have been leaving this hazardous spot," wrote Lord Jersey on the 9th. Robert Smith removed his young family to Layton. Many persons offered five guineas for a chaise to go only ten miles, and could procure none. William Hickey, who was in Amsterdam during the upheaval, says that English merchants received letters daily filled with particulars as if the whole kingdom was in despair. "Several families," he adds, "were so alarmed as to embark for Holland, and other parts of the Continent."

Lord Hillsborough's suggestion that the Tower Ditch should be filled was effected without delay. The drawbridges were kept up, water was let into

the moat, strangers were denied admittance, and every precaution taken to render the fortress available as a place of confinement until the prisons were rebuilt.¹

The gaiety of nations appears to have been once again eclipsed, as according to Johnson it had been two years previously on the death of Garrick, this day's *Gazetteer* and *Morning Chronicle* notifying that the Masque Ball at Carlisle House "intended to have been this evening, the 8th inst., is unavoidably postponed." This refers to one of those celebrated entertainments conducted by Mrs. Cornelys in Soho Square.

Colonel Charles Stuart wrote to his father, Lord Bute, on the 8th :²

"The King's Bench and Fleet Prisons were burnt to the ground last night. A Regiment was ordered to march from Lambeth to the first place, but by mistake they received a counter order by which means the Troops did not arrive in time to protect it; the Military were also too late to save the Fleet; they, however, fired upon the mob and killed two men.

At a little after ten the Bank was attacked; 200 of the Guards received the mob and part fired, but in so cautious manner that only 8 or 9 were killed and disabled. The mob afterwards destroyed a house near the Mansion House, and one or two houses in Holborn.

Col. Twistleton, who commanded the party at the Bank, informed me that they were led by a person in a Navy uniform with his sword drawn, that many decently dressed people encouraged them till they were near the Guard, but that they then retired and pretended to be spectators. . . . You will think it strange that Lord Amherst, out of near 12,000 men, should have only 300 men in the City, besides those stationed at and not to leave the

¹ P.A. 9th June.

² Mrs. Stuart Wortley's *A Prime Minister and his Son*, 1925, p. 182, where the date is printed (in error) "June 3."



XXIV. The Environs of the Royal Exchange, South Sea House,
and East India House, 1746

Tower, but such was the case, and so alarming did it appear to me that I could not help proposing a plan to my uncle for the defence of this side of the River, and he insisted on my stating it to Lord Hillsborough : That the three Bridges should be held with considerable detachments and a cannon, that the Tower should cover the right flank, the Parks the left ; in the Parks two thousand men ; on the six stations between a thousand men at each—viz. Whitechapel, More-fields, Chester House, Grey's Inn, Soho Square, Leicester Fields, commanded by six generals, who would send constant patrols maintaining communications between each station.

I went to the Bank in the evening . . . and was surprised to hear that the Lord Mayor and Aldermen had come to the resolution to petition Parliament to repeal the Act, and that the Mayor had published a hand-bill declaring he would release all the Prisoners taken in the several riots, which timid act he performed immediately.

From what I could learn many of the Common Council and Aldermen do not disapprove of the state of affairs.

A stronger detachment is sent to the City, for by Col. Twistleton's desire, I called on my return on Lord Amherst to represent the situation, and stated the necessity of protecting the South Sea House (*v. Plate XXIV.*).

The Mob robbed the Tollhouses on Black Fryers Bridge last night . . . they also exacted money from all the houses in the City, and plundered people that were in the hackney coaches."

Col. Stuart would appear to have been misinformed, however, with regard to military dilatoriness at the Fleet, in face of the official report made to Lord Amherst by Capt. H. F. Gardner of the Queen's Regiment of Light Dragoons :

" Thursday morning received intelligence from some Firemen that there was a large mob in Fleet Market, the Prison and the adjoining house in flames, that they had been beat from their duty, and their engine flung into the fire. We marched instantly into the Market. Col. Lake¹ (who commanded the detachment of Foot Guards) as well as myself were separately with the mob for at least a quarter

¹ Probably Gerard Lake, afterwards Commander-in-Chief in India. Created Lord Lake.

of an hour endeavouring by every fair means we could think of to persuade them to disperse, advising them with the consequence if they persisted in staying. This had not the least effect. I then read to them the King's orders, but to no purpose, and after having had my horse struck by fire-brands several times I ordered the quarter rank in front to charge them. I cannot ascertain the number killed. I believe 12 of them to have been cut down. . . . We returned to Whitehall about four in the morning.”¹

A report was received from Justice G. Reid :

“ District of St. George’s, Hanover Square
and St. Marylebone.

18 Argyll Street, 8th June, 1780 (noon).

Last night a party of 200 men of the Queen’s Regiment of Foot attended at the Duke of Gloucester’s Riding House commanded by Capt. Gray, from which several detachments were made during the course of the night.

Many alarms with applications for assistance. At about two this morning a small house in Woodstock Street was plundered and set on fire. Capt. Mosely of the 17th was very active in his endeavours to save it, and took two men in the act of plundering and burning whom he brought to me and whom I immediately conveyed to the Guard. Soon after I took two more whom there was great reason to suspect had been concerned in the same business. They were all directed to be conveyed to the Tilt Yard Guard.

My house in Argyll Street, agreeable to the intelligence I had received, was visibly doomed to destruction from the appearance of a considerable party of rioters, part of whom were armed with fire-arms, but from the good countenance shewn by a serjeant and 12 men of the Queen’s, they marched off without effecting their purpose.”

Some of the incidents of this day may be gathered from Friday’s press and other sources.

No business was transacted throughout the Cities of London and Westminster, every shop being shut from Whitechapel to Tyburn turnpike, with the exception of the Bank, where the run, instead

¹ *Amherst Papers*, civ. f. 8.

of being greater than ordinary, was nearly £80,000 less, a proof that the arrival of the troops was making for stability.

Wrote George Cumberland :

"The riots seem to be in a fair way of subsiding and we are now under military law, and our magistrates—our scoundrel magistrates—are superseded by a more absolute authority."

A party of the mob was busily employed during the morning in digging half-pence out of the ruins of the toll-gatherers' houses on Blackfriars Bridge, with which they filled their hats and pockets.

A chimney-sweeper accompanied by about twenty rioters entered the house of a merchant in Newgate Street, demanding to see the religious books. They were accordingly produced. The sweep, holding the Bible upside-down with a pretence of reading, exclaimed : "It was the right religion. It was Lord George Gordon's religion by God."

About three in the afternoon a party of rioters scrambled over the ruins of Fleet Prison in an attempt to fire houses adjoining thereto. A detachment of cavalry coming up met them on their retreat, and with their broadswords killed three on the spot, and wounded others.

News being sent to the keeper of the New Gaol in the Borough that a visit would be paid him, he set open the prison doors and a general release took place. The Gaol was preserved from fire by the arrival of the Guards.

A pastry cook's house facing St. Mildred's Church in the Poultry was burned down by the mob.

The coalheavers and the Irish chairmen of Wapping formed an Association to oppose the rioters.

The Hertfordshire Militia marched into Hyde Park and pitched their tents, the encampment consisting of the Royal Scots, the Queen's, and four regiments of Militia.

The third regiment of Dragoons commanded by General Fitzroy arrived in town. One party with an officer was stationed at the Lord President's in Piccadilly, while the remaining parties patrolled the streets for the protection of inhabitants.

Five of the most desperate "levellers," armed with shot guns, climbed the buildings of Fleet Market. One of them fired down upon the soldiers, whereupon a platoon returned the fire, and brought two down dead at their feet.

In the evening rioters broke into the house of M. Desormeaux, a celebrated silk dyer in Pearl Street, Spitalfields, and carried off upwards of four hundred pounds worth of silk.

Three desperadoes suspected of being concerned in firing different localities were apprehended in Black Boy Alley by the Guards and conveyed to the Savoy Prison. This Alley lay on the north side of Chick Lane, west of Saffron Hill (*v. Plate XX.*). A member of the London Military Association engaged in searching this ill-famed district described its dark and tortuous alleys :

" Attended by peace-officers, one of our detachments visited Chick Lane, Field Lane and Black Boy Alley. From Chick Lane we escorted several persons to Prison. These places constitute a separate town calculated for the reception

of the darkest and most dangerous enemies to society, in which when pursued for the commission of crimes they easily conceal themselves. The houses are divided from top to bottom into many compartments, with doors of communication in each and also with the adjacent houses, some having two to four doors opening into different alleys.¹ In many of the rooms I saw six, seven, eight to ten men in bed, in others as many women. . . . Into one apartment we crept through a trap door, our bayonets and pistols in our hands. . . . The peace-officers and the keepers of these houses appeared to be well-acquainted with each other, and on terms which rather shocked us. Our jealousy increased the more as these officers insisted there could be no motive for going into certain houses, although from them we brought away the most suspected persons.”²

The Deanery of St. Paul’s was threatened. The Dean (Newton, Bishop of Bristol) and his family removed to Kew, and a guard was placed in the house. The Dean and Chapter were at some expense entertaining the officers stationed at St. Paul’s, while the Ward made provision for the men. “ Both officers and men behaved incomparably well.”

Lord Rockingham’s house in Grosvenor Square betokened by its appearance a seat of war. Every front room was occupied by soldiers fully armed for the reception of rioters, whilst the stables were converted into barracks for the accommodation of cavalry which were kept in continuous readiness for action.

“ A detachment of the Herts did duty last-night at Devonshire House.”

¹ The condition of this infamous warren at that period is admirably described in *Holborn Hill*, a novel by Christian Tearle (the late E. J. Jaques, Esq.).

² *The Citizen’s Monitor . . . with observations on the late Tumults, the merits of the soldiery, and the London Volunteer Police Guard.* By Jonas Hanway, 1780.

These last excerpts irresistibly bring to mind the pathetic cry of Burke :

" For four nights I kept watch at Lord Rockingham's or Sir George Savile's, whose houses were garrisoned by a strong body of soldiers, together with numbers of true friends of the first rank, who were willing to share their danger. Savile-house, Rockingham-house, Devonshire-house to be turned into garrisons ! O tempora ! We have all served the country for several years—some of us for near thirty—with fidelity, labour and affection : and we are obliged to put ourselves under military protection for our houses and our persons." ¹

Lord Bute's Bedfordshire mansion, Luton Hoo, was in jeopardy. " Nothing but my son Charles, with 40 of the Royals, saved my house on Thursday."

Wilkes has himself summarised his activities this day :

" Attended the Lord Mayor. Received an order for Foot and Horse from Col. Twistedon on the commanding officer in St. Paul's Churchyard. Attended there. Marched from thence with 18 foot and 10 horse to St. Sepulchre's Churchyard. Received information of the several houses in Smithfield, Snowhill, Ozier Lane and Cow Lane threatened to be attacked. Doing duty till the next morning. Made several prisoners and sent them to the Compters."

Further trouble was expected in Broad Street :

" Navy Pay Office, 8th June, 1780.

To Lord Amherst—As Paymaster to the Rt. Hon. Welbore Ellis, Treasurer of His Majesty's Navy, I am humbly to represent to your Lordship that the Treasury Office of the Navy in Broad Street is threatened by the mob. I am therefore to desire your Lordship will be pleased to give orders that a proper guard may be sent for the security of the office.

ANDREW DOUGLAS."

¹ Burke's *Corr.* ii. 354.



XXV. The Environs of Newgate Prison, St Sepulchre's Church
and Hick's Hall, 1746

The Pay Office was attacked, but unsuccessfully.

From the sub-governor, deputy-governor and nine directors of the South Sea House arrived an urgent message to Lord Hillsborough :

“South Sea House, 8th June 1780.

In the present alarming situation of the City of London we think it our duty as Trustees for the Publick to apply to your Lordship for a guard at this House to protect the same from danger ; and therefore request your Lordship will order such a number of men as shall be thought necessary for that purpose.”

This request was notified to Lord Amherst, who thereupon advised Lord Hillsborough :

“I am ordering 100 men more to the Bank with detachments to Navy Office, Excise Office and St. Paul’s Church-yard, and taking every step I possibly can for those posts in which the South Sea House is included. Col. Twistedon is the Commanding Officer, of which your Lordship may acquaint the Governors of the South Sea House.”

The Governors of the East India Company were no less perturbed. To Lord Hillborough they wrote :

“East India House, 8th June 1780.

The present tumultuous proceedings having increased to a most alarming degree and the last night having produced the most fatal consequences in various parts of the City of London, and as it is not in my power to provide effectually for the safety of the Company’s House, Warehouses and immense property without the assistance of a Military Force, I am to request most earnestly that your Lordship will be pleased to give immediate directions that a force sufficient for their protection may be ordered to attend for that purpose at the Company’s House in Leadenhall Street early enough this evening to prevent the destruction of their property in case of a sudden assault (*v. Plate XXIV.*).

I have the honour to be, etc.,

WM. DEVAYNES.”

This request Lord Hillsborough immediately sent, under cover, to Lord Amherst.

The Customs House appears also to have been one of the rioters' objectives, for Lord Amherst wrote to Lord Stormont :

“ 8th June, 1780.

I have received the favour of your Lordship's letter with the letter from the Commissioners of the Customs enclosed, and I have the honour to acquaint you that the best part of two companies of Foot had been ordered for the immediate defence of the Custom House.”

Instructions were despatched at five o'clock to John Boddington, Secretary to the Board of Ordnance, at the Tower :

“ Lord Amherst desires you will immediately send, under a proper guard, to Greenwich Hospital two hundred stands of arms with ammunition, to be delivered to Lt. Gov. Maplesdon to be employed by him in the defence of that place.”¹

The district around Whitechapel was regarded by its inhabitants as another zone of danger.

“ 21 Great Alieif Street.

Goodman's Fields. 6 o'clock. 8th June, 1780.

Sir Stanier Porten, Sir : I have communicated to those gentlemen deputed by the Parishes of Whitechapel, St. George's, etc., who applied to me this morning, and who may be depended on as to their fidelity, being persons of very great property, that I had been with you and that they may expect an immediate assistance of Horse of about 100—to be in Whitechapel, Wellclose Square, from which they are exceedingly rejoiced and have promised to provide the Troops in whatever they want. The gentlemen are anxious to associate and act with the Military, as an attack is expected in this quarter it being so near the Tower. The adjoining parish of Aldgate in the City are now meeting to arm themselves to oppose the mob. Pray, sir, send us immediate assistance—the People's hearts are up and only want the

¹ *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 138. See Appendix III. p. 266.

assistance of the military to co-operate with them. JOHN STAPLES."

Walpole, on the 9th, recounts to the Countess of Ossory a serious incident of this day :

"The rioters attacked the Horse Guards about six p.m. in Fleet Street and, not giving them time to load, were repelled by the bayonet. Twenty fell, thirty five were wounded and sent to the hospital, where two died directly. Three of the guards were wounded, and a young officer named Marjoribanks. Mr. Conway's footman told me he was on a message at Lord Amherst's when the guards returned, and their bayonets were steeped in blood."

The *General Evening Post* of 8th-10th June announced that the Old Six Clerks Office in Chancery Lane had been converted into barracks for the accommodation of the military doing duty in Lincoln's Inn. An entry in the Black Books of that society points to there having been a large party of soldiers at this post :

"29th June, 1780. Ordered that the several tradesmen's bills for provisions, wine, etc., for the Northumberland Militia amounting to £364 12s. be paid."

The *London Evening Post* informed the public that on Thursday evening the students of the Middle Temple had formed themselves into a military association for the protection of their buildings. It consisted of three bodies, two of Englishmen under the command of Counsellors Mansfield and Erskine, and one of Irishmen commanded by Counsellor Rous. They were supplied with arms by Government, which shows that Rous' application to Lord Stormont (*v. p. 116*) had been successful.

James Mansfield, who superintended the drilling of the Templars, had been Wilkes's legal adviser. In 1776 he defended the Duchess of Kingston, and in 1779 he was elected M.P. for Cambridge University. On Wedderburn's promotion to the Bench he became Solicitor-General, and in that capacity figured in Gordon's trial in 1781.

"In the Temple a particular individual stood so prominently forth from among his companions in the spirited preparation which he so cheerfully made for its defence that they can experience no passion, except a little honest envy, at the mention of Mr. Mansfield, who would be ill treated were his name omitted."¹

There were cogent reasons for these precautions :

"Against the Temple and Lincoln's Inn the rage of the populace was directed by something more than their levelling idea of destroying every public building. To the Temple they were led by their thirst after the life of the Master, the Bishop of Lincoln, whom they almost murdered at the commencement of their holy crusade. Lincoln's Inn they promised to visit to demolish the chambers of Mr. Dunning who supported the obnoxious bill."²

The future Lord Eldon's version of the military prowess of the Bar is as follows :

"We in the Temple embodied ourselves into a troop to assist the military. We armed as well as we could and the next morning drew up in the Court, ready to follow out a troop of soldiers who were there on guard. When, however, the soldiers had passed through the gate, it was suddenly shut in our faces, and instantly locked, and the officer in command shouted from the other side 'Gentlemen I am much obliged for your intended assistance, but as I do not choose to allow my soldiers to be shot so I have ordered you to be locked in,' and away he galloped. We looked very foolish."

¹ *Fanaticism and Treason*, p. 73.

² *Id.* p. 74.

John Scott at that time had lodgings in Carey Street, and the Temple proved a welcome refuge for his wife :

" During the period of the riots I had to take Bessy to the Temple for safety. I never suffered more in my life. As we went along we were exposed to all sorts of insults. They tore off my wife's hat, the handkerchief from her breast, and when we arrived at the Temple every article of her dress was torn." ¹

The adventurous spirit of the Templars met with the entire approval of the Press :

" Much to the honour of the Barristers and Students of the Inner and Middle Temples, they yesterday morning unanimously agreed to defend themselves, in consequence of which they are now doing duty with a party of the Northumberland Militia in the passages, the gates of which are shut. A great number of stones were laid down in the street to mend the pavement, which the Barristers apprehended might be made use of against them ; they accordingly removed them to the Temple Lanes with their own hands, in which they were vigorously assisted by the inhabitants." ²

The vigour expended did not go unrewarded, as the Records of one of the Honourable Societies shows ³ :

7th June. Expenses incurred by introducing the Military during the late Riots.	
Middle Temple moiety - - - - -	£5 : 12 : 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
14th June. Paid for removing paving stones out of Fleet Street within the Temple Gate on the 8th inst. during the late riots -	£1 : 2 : 6
Servants for extraordinary care and attendance during the late riots - - -	£13 : 12 :

Lord Colchester's *Memoirs* (vol. i. p. xiv) contains rather more specific information :

" Mr. Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester, was enrolled in the Temple to bear a musket in the company commanded

¹ Twiss, i. 115.

² *Gazetteer*, 9th June.

³ *M.T.R.* p. 222.

by Howarth, and drew lots with his brother and the rest of his party to fire through a window that looked up Mitre Court, leading to Fleet Street, which was one of the avenues by which the mob was expected to come. Mansfield K.C. commanded the whole force of the Temple. Erskine commanded a company at the gate next Essex Street. Sergt. Heath commanded a gate leading to Black Friars ; the mob only assaulted the outer gates of the Temple, and the Northumberland Militia constituted the real protection within.”

The *London Evening Post* makes no mention of any self-protecting measures in Gray’s Inn, but this was due to such measures, in which Romilly bore his part, being already in train :

“ Gray’s Inn in which many Catholicks resided was particularly obnoxious,” says he. . . . “ It had become necessary for every man to trust to himself for his security ; and the barristers and students of the different Inns of Court determined to arm themselves in their own defence. The state of my health rendered me quite unequal to so great an exertion. I was ashamed, however, of being ill at such a season. I did therefore as others did, was up a whole night under arms, and stood as sentinel for several hours at the Gate [of Gray’s Inn] in Holborn. This fatigue, and the excessive heat of the weather, threw me back into a worse state of health than ever.”¹

Romilly’s recollections find confirmation in the *Records* of his Inn :

Disbursed 1780. . . . Paid Williams at Coffee house for wine and victuals the nights the gentlemen met in the Hall about the Riots - - - - -

£4 : 19 : 6

Paid Sundry Extra watchmen in June and July on account of the Riots - - -

£33 : 16 : 6

On Thursday evening, says Dr. Burney, nearly a hundred rioters were found drunk about Fleet Ditch and were secured.

¹ Romilly, i. 51.

"Our Lord put it into the heart of his servant, our gracious King," says the pious Hutton, "to issue a most humane and prudent Proclamation for the restoration of peace, and good order, in this distracted city.... The expectation of the events which were now to follow was indeed dreadful; for it could scarcely be supposed otherwise than that resistance would be made by those who had, these four or five days past, usurped dominion over their fellow-subjects. During the day, the King's troops, by their appearance, kept everything quiet. Some disturbances particularly in the Borough were soon quelled by the soldiers. When night came on, and the rioters in spite of the Proclamation, began to assemble again in vast numbers, the troops stationed in different parts of the metropolis were obliged to pursue, fire among, and disperse them, by which means public tranquillity was once more and effectually restored. We, in obedience to the Royal Proclamation, kept at home after sunset and thus escaped all danger and mischief to which many of the inhabitants exposed themselves. Mr. Strahan in New Street, a printer to His Majesty,—who on account of the menaces of the rioters to demolish his house, had a strong guard of soldiers with him,—was kind enough to send some of them to our place, to be informed of the avenues to it, adding the humane offer to assist us upon any emergency.... Companies and volunteers were now found in almost every street to prevent any further disorderly proceedings. But who is able to express the feelings of our hearts when we, after a few hours of the night, could believe the report of peace and tranquillity restored? For 'When the Lord turned again our captivity, we were like them that dream.' 'Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing, seeing that the Lord has done great things for us, whereof we were glad.'"

The newspapers of Friday supply some information respecting the disturbances in the Borough.

"Yesterday two public houses in Long Lane, Southwark, the one the sign of 'Simon the Tanner,' and the other 'The Ship,' were both set on fire with design of opening an avenue to a part of the New Gaol."¹

"The chief employment of the mobility yesterday has

¹ M.C., 9th June, 1780.

been to burn down the spunging-houses (as they are commonly called) in the Borough, twenty of which had experienced the effects of their rage at one o'clock."¹

"In the evening many of the rioters of Long Lane, Southwark, were killed by the military, and numbers taken and put into the New Prison."

"The public should be informed," emphasised the *London Evening Post*, 8th-10th June, "that it is to the manly firmness of Mr. Justice Gould they are indebted for their exemption at this hour from the insufferable tyranny of martial law. A Privy Council was summoned on Thursday at which all the Judges attended, when to his immortal honour he dared to stand single in his opposition to a measure which he stated as unnecessary in the present instance, and as a precedent in the last degree dangerous to the liberties and constitution of the country. His perseverance prevailed, the laws of England are in force, and exemplary justice, unaided by violence, will secure from danger all men but the guilty. . . . Sir Henry Gould has ever been esteemed by the whole profession as one of the ablest and honestest judges in Westminster Hall. The name of Gould will be dear to Englishmen."²

Horace Walpole gives a somewhat different turn to this incident. He states that the judges, on being consulted whether the riots would authorise shutting up the Courts of Justice and declaring military law, Gould alone dissented, and that Lord Bathurst, then much fuddled, persuaded the King not to make Gould too popular by contradicting him. Thereupon it was decided not to close the Courts nor proclaim Martial Law, but to empower the military to act at their discretion.³

¹ *M.P.*, 9th June, 1780.

² Sir Henry Gould was first cousin to Henry Fielding; they together travelled the Western Circuit. The present Earl of Cavan is descended from him.

³ Bathurst notwithstanding, a Common Council on 19th June unanimously resolved to present Sir Henry Gould with the freedom of the City in a gold box "for having prevented so alarming a violation of the Constitution as the establishment of Martial Law." The author does not wish to suggest that Gould was playing to the gallery.

But that Martial Law was more than discussed an ominous paragraph in the *Public Advertiser* of 10th June forcibly indicates :

"The Court Martial before Sir Charles Gould, Military Judge-Advocate, sat all day yesterday at the Horse Guards for the examination of those Rioters in confinement, when some are said to be acquitted and others ordered for execution."

The Judge-Advocate had no jurisdiction over civilians.

The debate at the Council Table on the policy of adopting military law was of great constitutional importance. Martial Law in its primary sense, implying that the ordinary or municipal law is suspended and the jurisdiction of a country, in whole or in part, is in the hands of military tribunals, had never been, and in consequence of Mr. Justice Gould's attitude has never become, part of English Law. But Martial Law, as the common law right of the Crown and its servants to repel force by force—not necessarily by military force—in case of invasion, insurrection, riot or violent tumult, has always been recognised as part of the law of this kingdom. It was Martial Law in this second sense to which the Privy Council, after so grievous a delay, determined to resort.

By the common law all citizens (including soldiers in that term), not physically unfit, are bound to assist in the suppression of riots when so required by the civil authorities. In modern times, policemen and less frequently soldiers, by virtue of their training and equipment for the exertion of physical force, are usually first called upon to suppress

violent breaches of the peace. But what civilians soever are engaged in such a compulsory duty they are bound to use the force the occasion requires, and, at their peril, to use no more than the occasion demands. In their acts of repression they are to proceed with judgment. There exists a strong disinclination to ordering out the military for the maintenance of order, lest their presence should aggravate the tension and hostility. "We are very averse to allowing the military to be employed to prevent disturbances," said the Rt. Hon. R. B. Haldane in 1908,¹ "unless under circumstances which do not admit of being dealt with by a force less menacing than a military force necessarily is." But once the military are called in they enjoy no greater exemption from liability to the law for their conduct than policemen or citizens unconnected with the administration. They are bound, each and all of them, to withstand and put down riots and disturbances, and are authorized to employ that degree of force, even to the taking of life, as may be necessary to effect the purpose of restoring the Public Peace. The soldier, so far from enjoying any exemption, is really under greater restraint than civilians, for if on being summoned by the magistrate to act, he discovers on inspecting the situation for himself that there is only such a disturbance as a police force can cope with, he should be careful, despite the magistrate's order, not to intervene.

This in bare outline is the legal position which

¹ Evidence given as Secretary of State for War before a Select Committee on Employment of Military in cases of Disturbance.

has been interposed for the possible assistance of the non-legal student. It is unnecessary to amplify it at this point, as the reader will have the opportunity of learning in the next chapter the opinion of Lord Mansfield on the subject expressed in Parliament a few days after the riots. Furthermore, the problem at the present day is less difficult than in the eighteenth century, when no police force worth the name existed, and the law-abiding public were consequently vastly more dependent upon the protection of the soldiery.

Lord Jersey sent the following diarial record to the Countess Spencer :

" Our state remains nearly the same—all riot, confusion, and hourly expectation of more, but the town is so full of troops that it is impossible the mob can make any very great impression. . . . Last night [Wednesday] the town seemed quite on fire towards Fleet Street and those parts. The scene now alters a little, because the Troops having liberty to fire, the only accounts which come in to this place, Brookes's, every moment, is how many were killed here and how many there. Nothing can be so shocking as our situation, and how the night will end is all a chance. Robberies too begin and all sorts of lawless acts. 1500 thieves are now at large."

Joseph Grove wrote to John Grimston at Kilnwick :

" 8th June, 1780, New Inn.
Thursday evening, 10 o'clock.

Great numbers of prisoners have been taken to-day and will probably in a day or two be made examples of. Several were killed last night in different parts of the town, and two were shot at noon to-day in Fenchurch Street, having bars of iron which they refused to give up. Every street has soldiers patrolling to-night with orders to fire on any four persons collected together who will not instantly disperse. Colonel Hervey's Yorkshire regiment arrived this afternoon,

and several regiments are hourly coming in. . . . The mob have set all the prisons open, and turned out on the public near 500 felons.¹ who . . . I fear if not speedily taken will plunder the adjacent villages. At present everything appears quiet and I hope will continue so though Lord Amherst told our ancients when they applied for a guard to-day, that they well knew there was a plan laid to burn all the law societies. . . . There is no quitting town whilst these dreadful commotions exist, not knowing whose property will be next attacked. I wish you never to experience the horrors we felt last night.”²

Grove’s view that stability was gaining ground was shared by the younger Pitt, then a law-student. To his mother the Countess of Chatham, in a somewhat supercilious strain, he wrote :

“ Lincoln’s Inn, 8th June, 1780.

The accounts which the papers will have given you of the religious mobs which have infested us for some days will make you desirous to know in what state we now are. I have the satisfaction to tell you that from the appearance of to-night everything seems likely to subside, and we may sleep again as in a Christian country. Lincoln’s Inn has been surrounded with flames on all sides.”

Another member of the Inn was less optimistic, for Mr. Batt, K.C., wrote to James Harris, M.P. :

“ Lincoln’s Inn, 8th June, 1780.

I have not time nor words to describe the horror and anxiety of mind I have lately felt at the villainies practising in this devoted city, which I greatly fear are yet much short of what is to be expected. I have been but five hours in bed for both the two last nights. On Tuesday I was a spectator of the detestable conflagration at Lord Mansfield’s house, where I heard and saw such things as nothing less than the evidence of my own sight would have convinced me could have happened. . . . Last night I saw seven fires raging at once in different parts of the town : a horrid and affecting spectacle after what I had seen on Tuesday night,

¹ An under-estimate.

² *Lady Du Cane MSS.* (Hist. MSS. Com.), 1905, p. 240.

THE ENCAMPMENT IN ST. JAMES'S PARK MDCCXXX



the memory of which never will be effaced from my mind. This night we are quiet and I hear no attempts at fire have been made, but I have too good reason to fear that further mischief is still to be expected, and that the authors of these infernal practices have laid their schemes very deeply.

American treachery and English treason I believe are at the bottom of it, and religion is the pretext. However, say nothing of this beyond your own family.

We of this Society, as well as the Temple and Gray's Inn, are associated for our protection, and I have by me a musket and bayonet and am to patrol at 2 o'clock for an hour. We are 120 strong besides servants.”¹

Mrs. Montagu, writing on the 8th from Sandleford to Mrs. Vesey—once Sterne’s friend, and still the fairy of the Blue Stockings—says :

“ The first news I heard this morning was that a Regiment of Dragoons quartered at Newbury were sent for to London in the night. . . You alarm me greatly for Mr. Burke. . . I wish the mob would consider that Nature does not make such a man once in a century. Pray write every post no matter for franks.”

Sir Walter Spencer-Stanhope entered in his *Diary* :

“ General Panic. Town filled with troops. Camps to be formed in Hyde Park and St. James’s Park. Lord Rockingham’s house guarded these last three nights.”

Langdale’s friend, Mr. P. Metcalfe, wrote to Lord Stormont the following letter which was forwarded to Lord Amherst :

“ 8th June, 1780. Thursday evening, 9 o’clock.

Mr. Metcalfe has this instant received two expresses following each other from his Distillery and large mills situated at West Ham near Bow—3 miles from Whitechapple Church, that the Mob from undoubted intelligence mean to attack them to-night. His Distillery pays *communibus annis* to the Excise £60,000 per annum. His mills wholly supplied the camps at Coxheath and Warley.’

¹ Malmesbury, *Letters*, i. 466.

An armed association of gentlemen in and about Lincoln's Inn Fields to the number of several hundreds patrolled that neighbourhood all last night to preserve the peace thereof.¹

The following anonymous document was received by Mr. Robinson, Lord North's private secretary, at eleven a.m. on Friday morning :

" I wonder you did not far see the wicked desin of bringing a Bill in to the house in favour of the roman Catalounges . . . There is a mob on foot suported and encouraged by desining men to suport protestens down with popery. But believe me Religin is not the cause for they are composed of house brakers pickpockets and al maner of wagerts (? vagrants). I have been amongs them and percive what they are. Had they goatt their end last night St. James was to be the next attempt. They are to be suported tel they ourturn the government or else draw the troupes from the country til the french land, the inhabitanis is rob'd there propertes destroed if they make any resistans [indecipherable]. If act was repaled the people wod soon setel the mob but present they dare not . . . Composition

200 house brakers with tools.

550 pickpockets

6000 of alsorts

50 men that pass them and gives them orders
what to doe they only come att night.

I have left them for I am tyerd I am sorry for what is done al ready lett his Lordship take cares of his [? self] friday night."²

Although the law-breakers were now held in check in the city, their hostility was still felt in the east end :

" Public Office, Shadwell, 9th June, 1780.

Sir Stanier Porten : Sir—I beg you will be pleased to represent to his Lordship [E. of Hillsborough] the dangerous situation I am now in as a magistrate, and altho' I have for the present escaped the fury of the Rioters both in my

¹ *Morning Post*, 9th June.

² P.R.O.

person and house yet their repeated threatenings and seeming inveteracy against me for having taken a very early and active part on Monday last when I ordered the Troops from the Tower and headed them in Virginia Street give me much alarm insomuch that I have been and am now compelled to be absent from home.

I should further represent to his Lordship the exposed and defenceless situation of that part of the Tower Hamlets between Whitechapel and Blackwall in which distance no Troops are stationed.

I should therefore submit to his Lordship's discretion whether it would not be both prudent and necessary to request Lord Amherst would give such Orders for the protection of myself and the defenceless inhabitants above-mentioned as to his Lordship shall seem meet.

I am, with great regard, etc.

JNO. SHERWOOD."

P.S.—A man attends to receive any orders.

Nevertheless, a beginning was made in the east end of London of rounding up the rebels :

" Great Alief Street, 9th June, 1780.
3 o'clock afternoon.

Sir Stanier Porten, Sir—Be pleased to acquaint Lord Hillsborough that having received credible information that one of the men who carried a flag at the head of a rebel mob on Thursday evening in the parish of St. Mary, Whitechapel, was in a public house in the said parish, I applyed to the commanding officer of a party of Dragoons who are quartered in Whitechapel for two of his men to aid me in securing the said culprit. My request was instantly complyed with. I seized the man and proceeded with him immediately to the Tower and delivered him into the custody of the Governor without the least molestation. I am intent on finding such persons who have taken the lead in the Rebel's cause in order to come at the Principals.

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN STAPLES."

Wilkes, too, persisted in his magisterial activities :
" Attended at Mansion House and afterwards till three o'clock examined all the prisoners at Guildhall."

Mr. Mawhood's diary evidences a growing feeling of security :

" Friday, 9th June. Came to town to breakfast. Received neighbours' compliments on my escape. All now beginning to be more peaceable, I order'd some of my goods home."

The following report, from the *Public Advertiser*, ushers in the concluding scenes of the drama :

" On Friday soon after 2, His Majesty being present, a Cabinet Council was convened to take into consideration the most effectual means of securing the promoters of the late alarming commotions. As a consequence, a warrant was issued by H.M's Principal Secretaries of State directed to Mann and Staley, two of H.M's messengers-in-ordinary for the apprehending and taking into safe custody the Rt. Hon. Lord George Gordon. The messengers on receiving their warrants instantly repaired to his house in Welbeck Street, and getting admittance were introduced to his Lordship, whom they made acquainted with the nature of their visit. Lord George replied ' If you are sure it is me you want I am ready to attend you.' Upon which a hackney coach being previously got ready, and a party of the Light Horse having received orders to attend in an adjacent street, his Lordship was conducted safely by them, about 6 o'clock, to the Horse Guards. The inhabitants of Welbeck Street collected about the carriage and inveighed against him bitterly, as the author of all the present calamities ; to avoid which reproaches he desired the blinds to be drawn up, which request the messengers complied with. A long examination took place in the War Office before the Lord President, Lord North, Lord Amherst, the Secretaries of State, and several other Lords of the Privy Council ; and at half an hour after nine Lord George Gordon was committed a close prisoner to the Tower. The Guards that attended him were by far the greatest in number ever remembered to guard a state prisoner. A large party of infantry preceded in front, his lordship following in a coach, in which were two officers, two soldiers rode behind the coach, and immediately followed General Carpenter's regiment of Dragoons, after which came a Colonel's guard of the Foot Guards, besides a party of the militia who marched on each

side of the coach. The cavalcade passed over Westminster Bridge, through St. George's Fields and the Borough to the Tower where his lordship alighted about 10 o'clock."

Walpole entered in his Journal :

" 9th June. Lord George Gordon was seized . . . It was much apprehended that there would be a rising in Scotland, and Duke Hamilton, Lord Selkirk, the Marquis of Graham, and others were sent down privately to prevent it. Fisher, a very shrewd man, secretary to the Protestant Association, was taken up, examined and discharged, but this, I believe was in concert with himself. I know he had been privately at Twickenham with Welbore Ellis on the 8th, and it was said he had given up all the correspondence of the Society."

Walpole was inaccurate in stating that Fisher had handed over the Association's correspondence to the authorities :

" Rotation Office, Whitechapel,
10th June, 1780, 2.30 p.m.

To Sir Stanier Porten—Be pleased to acquaint the Earl of Hillsborough that at five o'clock this morning Lord Feilding seized Mr. Fisher, Secretary of the Protestant Association, who immediately declared that on hearing of Lord Gordon's situation he destroyed all the papers that would hurt his friends, or words to the same effect. Lord Feilding proceeded with his prisoner to the Tower and I remained and examined all the papers. There were none respecting the said Association, all being respecting his business as an attorney. For various reasons Fisher could not be seized before I had so many difficulties to encounter.

JOHN STAPLES."

Romilly notices these events in these words :

" Lord George Gordon underwent an examination last Friday before the Privy Council during three hours. Nothing more, it is reported, appeared against him than an inflammatory letter which he sent to be inserted in one of the newspapers, wherein he applauded the rioters for what they had done, and encouraged them to further excesses; and some private letters to confidential friends in Scotland, relating the events that had passed in London, and speaking

of them in terms of high approbation ; but there was no evidence of his having planned any revolution. 'The Privy Council committed Lord George a prisoner to the Tower.'

The newspaper paragraph encouraging the rioters is no doubt that submitted to Lord Stormont by W. Woodfall (*v. p. 156*), who had very properly consulted the Government before opening his columns to Gordon, and the authorities finding that Gordon was occupying himself with his pen forthwith ordered all his correspondence to be intercepted at the Post Office.

Colonel Stuart wrote to the Earl of Bute :

" 8th June, 1780.

I came from the City to Whitehall at nine o'clock, and there found the Council sitting and examining Lord George Gordon, who had been made prisoner in the evening. I remained there till ten, and left them still employed.

I am so horrified and tired that I scarcely feel able to acquaint you with what has passed ; indeed I am so provoked that it adds to my fatigue ; a small printed hand-bill will shew you that the timid resolutions of the City Magistrates are seconded by a similar conduct of the advisers of his Majesty.

The fear that appears among the better sort of people in the City surpasses description : they talk of whole streets where there are none but disaffected people, they mistrust one another, and those I have conversed with generally agree that many very principal men among them are deeply concerned in the business ; notwithstanding which we have not been able to make any discovery." ¹

Colonel Stuart again kept his father informed of events :

[Undated.] ²

" I wrote last night at eleven o'clo., but have since heard that the Posts are stopp'd, and therefore conclude my letter remains at the Office. . . .

¹ *A Prime Minister and his Son*, p. 185. Clearly the date should be 9th June.

² Probably written on the 9th June.

Near a hundred and fifty are prisoners in Wood Street, the Poultry and Artillery Ground. I have seen the prisoners, and am sorry to add that they all appear too wretched to have been the schemers of so deep and well conducted a project.

People were yesterday evening ordered to destroy their blue cockades, and several men who did not immediately comply have been wounded by the Troops. The order has taken full effect, and no person with that badge appears.

The Mayor and Aldermen in general play a strange part ; they told the mob the other evening that if they dispersed the prisoners should be released, and their fears still operating they solicited the Colonel of the Detachment for the release of the men, in order (should any punishment take place) that it might appear the sole act of the military.

I enclose you a hand-bill sent about, and the Paper it mentions ; more and more are my apprehensions of the deep designs of artful people, but strange to tell the People well affected are so alarmed that they will not give any information lest their houses and property should suffer.

Lord Amherst has just wrote Col. Twistleton a letter he has read to me. It contains the surprise of His Majesty and his confidential friends at the Mayor's conduct in releasing prisoners, and an order for him to attend the Council this evening. As I shall go with him I may inform you more. Everything is quiet, but want of determined measures by His Majesty may involve this country further than he imagines.¹ I shall take care he knows the truth of everything.

I am always in the City except at nights, and take my station at Grocer's Hall, now the City Head Quarters."

The form of the Bill of Release of the Prisoners by the Mayor was "Whereas People were taken for a supposed Riot, the Mayor and Council think proper to release them."²

¹ The reader will know, a fact with which Colonel Stuart was then clearly unacquainted, that the King had pressed for sterner measures.

² *A Prime Minister and his Son*, p. 186.

Kennett's attempt to release prisoners is corroborated by the following letter from Lord Amherst :

“ Whitehall, 9th June, 1780.

To the Commanding Officer of the Detachment of the Troops at the Bank :

Col. Twistleton having just now informed me that the Lord Mayor has made application to him in favour of one of the men taken yesterday at Newgate, and as the like application may be made to you, I think it necessary to inform you that no application whatever in favour of Prisoners who have been seized and are secured by the Troops must be attended to.”¹

Sarah Hoare, writing to her mother on 9th June :

“ Thou wilt, I am certain, rejoice with us when I tell thee that peace is again restored. Last night a very large body of troops was stationed in different parts of the city, who patrolled the streets all night, and preserved perfect tranquillity.

... All wears a hostile aspect. 300 soldiers are constantly on duty at the Excise Office,² and guards are likewise placed at the Pay Office. The largest numbers are about the Bank, Post Office, and Mansion House. The transactions of the last five days are I believe marked in indelible characters on our minds.”

Lord Jersey faithfully reported progress to the Countess Spencer :

“ Friday evening, 7 o'clock, 9th June, 1780.

Almost immediately after I wrote last night, a sudden calm took place, and the night was perfectly quiet. A great many prisoners have been taken, from some of which it is to be hoped will be discovered who aids these people, for it does appear they have some countenances besides their original grievances. To-day I have been all over the City, where everything appeared quiet, but I saw a party of Light Horse and Infantry going to quell a riot near Moorfields : they brought back some prisoners.

¹ *Amherst Papers*, ciii. f. 251.

² The actual number stationed there was 150 ; while the number at the Bank was 534, *v. Appendix*.

I hear this moment, which makes me send by the stage, that Lord G. Gordon is apprehended. What a scene! Numbers of people are robbed in the streets, and everybody's house is in hourly danger of fire or plunder, but the soldiers must save us now. I will write again by and by."

The sudden calm that supervened on Thursday night is strikingly confirmed by a chronicler in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1780 (p. 369) :

"The writer of this paragraph, whose residence is at a small but equal distance from three dreadful fires which at the same period were blazing on Wednesday night, when he was surrounded by hundreds of families distractedly employed in removing their children and their valuables, sat down to his literary amusements on Thursday night as uninterruptedly as if he had resided on Salisbury Plain. Not a human voice to be heard!"

In truth, from the time the three bridges over the Thames were occupied by Regulars, the Government became masters of the situation.

At a later hour on Friday night Lord Jersey amplified his first letter :

"Brookes's, 9th June, 1780.

Lord George is now under examination. The prisoners that are taken grow numerous, tradesmen and others bring them in from all parts, for the business of the town is quite stopped, and associations of parishes are beginning to be formed to defend themselves.

No fires or tumults yet to-night, and I trust there will not be, the military is so strong and active, but we must not, for our own private sakes, be too secure."

That active preparations for the establishment of Military Law in the stricter sense of that term had been put in train, and only awaited the decision of the Privy Council, the following communication from Lord Amherst to Lord Stormont can leave no manner of doubt :

"Whitehall, 9th June, 1780.

My Lord : The Recorder has been here to express his hopes of there being no intentions of trying the prisoners by Military Law, as report goes they are to be tryed and hanged immediately in the Park, and that he has most dreadful apprehensions of the consequences of it, for there could be no necessity for it now as everything was quiet and the Courts of Justice open. The Speaker has been here and hoped the necessity of military executions might if possible be avoided. I thought it right to tell your Lordship this though we are providing everything as if these particulars of the conversation of the above gentlemen had been known."

Similarly George Cumberland : "Everyone is ordered to keep at home, and to-night it is said some of the ringleaders are to be executed in different parts of the city."

The following undated letter from Col. Stuart to Lord Bute was probably penned on the 10th :¹

"In the course of the night an attempt was made to burn some houses in Spittle Fields, but the rioters were fired upon by some of the independent Companies and were killed, wounded or taken. I should mention that these Companies have shew'd great spirit during the whole of this business.

In consequence of a complaint made by Lord Beau-champ, the Mayor was examined by the Council, when he declared that his fears had prevented his doing his duty in Moorfields on Tuesday night.

Lord G. Gordon was likewise examined, and, I am told, in a sulky manner refused giving any information whatever. When he was taken, they sealed the boxes containing his papers, and upon searching his person found a pocket pistol, and a large knife, the officers asked why he carried such weapons : he replied, 'to defend himself against the Roman Catholics.'

This morning the Secretary to their Association was taken, likewise the printer of the seditious Paper I enclosed in my last, the Treasurer and Captain of the Banditti.

¹ *A Prime Minister and his Son*, p. 188.

Mr. Woodford¹ whispered to me to-day that he had heard at the Secretary of State's that Sir J. L. was shrewdly suspected of having assisted these gentry with money, and this circumstance so nearly agrees with what my Mother told me before she left Town that I should apprehend grounds for the suspicion. No disturbance has happened to-day, and from certain accounts there has been none in the country, which is a material piece of good news, and leads me to think that the irregularity of this Mob has plunged them into the depth of their scheme before the business was generally ripe. . . .

It is computed that near 1600 have escaped from prisons, and I am told that the roads near London are so infested with vagabonds that there is no safety; indeed, the streets of London are so crowded with low people that one would imagine all manufactures and trade at a standstill."

It scarcely admits of doubt that "Sir J. L." here referred to is Sir James Lowther, who married one of Lord Bute's daughters. That Lowther was closely associated with Gordon was recorded at page 47. He later became a peer, and enjoyed the unenviable title of "the bad Lord Lonsdale." That he was a bitter opponent of the Government may be gathered from the report of a speech in the *Political Magazine* for 1780 (p. 278) :

"Sir James Lowther told the House that if the Petition (which he introduced) was not granted he should recommend the people of Cumberland not to pay their taxes, and that if the Government attempted to dragoon the people of Cumberland into paying them there would ensue the most horrid consequence."

"On Friday," says Dr. Burney,
"there were several disturbances in the Borough where three or four fires were made in one of the streets with the furniture and effects of an unfortunate Roman Catholic. However at night all seemed perfectly quiet, and I was one

¹ The officer who had ordered the troops to fire at Lord Mansfield's.

of the few who ventured to go to the Opera, where all the performers, being guilty of a religion and country different from the mad bull John, sung and danced with the utmost fear and trembling ; yet Pacchierotti is as superior in courage to the rest as in talents. . . . No soldiers could be spared for the usual opera guard, and all was melancholy and forlorn. I began, however, to tranquillise, and imagine all was over ; but alas the mischief is gone into the country ! for an express arrived last night from Bath in eight hours, with the news of the colliers having entered that city.”¹

Fanny Burney writing from Bath, expressing the greatest concern for the safety of her father and sisters, proceeds :

“ All the stage-coaches that come into Bath from London are chalked over with ‘ No Popery,’ and Dr. Harrington called here just now and says the same was chalked this morning upon his door, and is scrawled in several places about the town.”

Miss Burney then adds :

“ Since I writ the above this morning to our utter amazement and consternation the new Roman Catholic Chapel in this town was set on fire at about nine o’clock. It is now burning with a fury that is dreadful, and the house of the priest belonging to it is in flames too. The poor persecuted man has, I believe, escaped with life, though pelted, followed and very ill-used. Mrs. Thrale and I have been walking about with the footmen several times. The rioters do their work with great composure, and though there are knots of people in every corner, all execrating the authors of such outrages, nobody dares oppose them.”

The same night Mrs. Thrale wrote :

“ The flames of the Romish Chapel are not yet extinguished, and the rioters are going to Bristol to burn that. Their shouts are still in my ears, and I do not believe a dog or a cat in the town sleeps this night.”

It was almost tragic that Thomas Langdale, the Holborn distiller, who had been recommended to

¹ Twining, p. 83.

go to Bath for the relief of his mind, should on his first arrival be met with the sight of the Bath Roman Catholic chapel in flames. He was obliged to return to Devizes.

The Press places on record some minor events :

"On Friday night the principal gentlemen of Clement's Inn armed themselves, and kept watch in the Great Hall. They were attended by an officer's guard, and the several avenues were kept guarded all day, as well as all night, to prevent any suspicious persons passing."

"The gentlemen of Lyon's Inn on Friday, animated by Mr. John Drummond, whose active zeal for the preservation of peace and the restoration of good order does him infinite credit, have copied the examples of the other Inns of Court and have armed themselves."

Saturday's news sheets notified the following occurrences of this day :

Thirty-six persons wounded by the soldiery were carried to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where eight died and several languished dangerously ill.

A party of the South Hampshire Militia were quartered in Christ Church, Newgate Street, to protect Christ's Hospital.

About thirty of the escaped Newgate felons, among whom was one Pearce under capital conviction, sent word to the keeper that they were ready to surrender themselves on the first summons.

"Workmen were engaged erecting sheds within the King's Bench for the reception of prisoners who were surrendering to the Marshal."

It was no doubt of these dispossessed prisoners of the King's Bench and Fleet Prison that Dickens wrote with deep discernment in Chapter LXVIII. of *Barnaby Rudge*, describing the hopeless condition

of these social outcasts who had lost their sole habitation.

"A large guard of soldiers were put to duty, day and night, at the New River Head."

Sixty-five men were protecting the source of London's then water-supply.¹

Lord Jersey again sent his bulletin to Countess Spencer :

" 10th June, 1780.

After a long examination before the Secretaries of State and the new Chief Justice Wedderburn, Lord G. Gordon was committed close prisoner to the Tower for High Treason. He kept a tolerable good countenance and answered with great cunning all their questions, but shrank when his crime was explained to him, and his place of confinement declared.

The Lord Mayor was also examined before the Privy Council, and he appears to have behaved with great timidity in the whole affair, if not worse, and to have been the cause of the loss of Newgate at least, possibly most of the other prisons.

Quiet seems now to be the idea of everybody and that this mob is crushed. I do not think so, and last night hand-bills were found appointing another meeting for the rioters on Sunday or Monday.

In this interval of rest we are setting off for Middleton, endeavouring to fancy that this whole country is not upon the brink of ruin."

It is an instance of Lord Stormont's invariable courtesy that he considerately advised the Duke of Gordon :

" St. James's, 10th June, 1780.

My Lord—We think it a mark of respect due to your Grace to give you the earliest intelligence in our power of an event for which we feel the utmost concern. We have been obliged, from the indispensable duty of our office, to commit Lord George Gordon to the Tower for High

¹ Appendix, p. 265.

Treason, of which he stands charged by information upon oath. We beg leave to assure your Grace that it gave us the utmost pain to be under this necessity, and especially as it relates to one so nearly connected with your Grace.

We are, etc.,
STORMONT,
HILLSBOROUGH."

The Duke's acknowledgment was in equally good taste :

" Glasgow, 16th June, 1780.

My Lord—I had the honour of your Lordship's letter, which I shall always look upon as a very particular mark of your respect and attention to me. It gave me the deepest concern to hear that my brother Lord George Gordon stands charged with a crime of such magnitude as that of High Treason. My feelings for his most unhappy situation would have naturally led me to have set out for London immediately if I had not thought it my duty to remain with my Regiment. As soon as I am informed that I can with propriety leave I shall appear before His Majesty to testify my attachment to his person and Government and to implore his clemency in case my unfortunate brother shall be found guilty."

Wilkes continued alert in strangling all attempts at resuscitating revolutionary outbreaks :

" Saturday, 10th June. At eleven dispersed a great mob in Fleet Street at Wm. Moore's No. 159. Seized several treasonable papers and ordered into custody T. and R. Ward. Issued a warrant against Wm. Moore.

Issued a warrant for searching and securing all idle and disorderly persons and all concealed arms in the Ward of Farringdon Without.

Ordered all public houses to be shut at ten at night, and not to open till four in the morning. Patrolled the whole Ward of Farringdon Without."

From the country Lord Jersey sent the following resumé to Countess Spencer :

" Middleton Park [Oxon], 11th June, 1780.

We are at last arrived here. . . . The difference of this scene from what I have left is not to be described, nor indeed

was that in any manner to the reality. I verily believe had this step [military interposition] not been taken the whole city would have been in ashes in three days' time. One night there were eight or nine large fires at once . . . the engines were not allowed to play, and at one place they were thrown into the fire. Langdale, distiller, puts his loss at £70,000. He offered £2000 to the mob ; they scorned his bribe and could help themselves to his liquor, which liquor cost many their lives, for they say a most surprising number died actually of the drink or lay upon the burning ruins till they were suffocated or the buildings fell in upon them. You will see by the hand-bill enclosed, published by Government, what the idea was all over London. At Newgate and the Bank I found them expecting a military execution immediately. This report may be stopped, but the minds of the people are not quieted as you may see by the paper called the *Thunderer* if it is to be had. Wilkes has taken up the publisher. Lord George's secretary is the supposed author. This Wilkes has behaved with great spirit against the mob : he ordered the officer to fire at the Bank, and the reason, they say, that there was not more men killed then was that the Guards fired over their heads designedly."

The confusion to which the Ministry were reduced by the commotions, a letter from Lord Hillsborough to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, Viceroy of Ireland, sufficiently discloses :

" Private and Secret. 11th June, 1780, St. James's.

I should not have failed to have given your Excellency constant accounts of the dreadful and unaccountable insurrection which has made such devastation in this town, and threatened not less than the total destruction of it, and even the subversion of the Government, but that I really have not had time to write any letter but such as were absolutely necessary. . . . I think it fit to inform your Excellency that Lord George Gordon in the course of his examination yesterday informed us that he had received a letter from the Protestants in and near Killarney in Ireland, desiring his lordship's advice how they should behave as they were under great apprehensions from the Papists in that part. This I believe his lordship disclosed without consideration, and

it is very probable he has correspondents in different parts of that kingdom which will make it necessary for your Excellency to be very attentive to this subject, lest disturbances should also break out on your side, for I apprehend it would totally destroy poor Ireland to have a contest about religion superadded to those about which we are threatened about the Constitution."

Lady Anne Erskine's fears of an attack were substantiated in a minor form on Sunday night :

" Northampton Chapel in the Spa Fields was broke open and robbed of all the cushions, books and other moveables. The communion plate, which it is thought the rogues principally aimed at, was preserved, it being always kept at a different place."¹

To his daughter Polly, Wilkes wrote a hurried note at two o'clock on Sunday afternoon :

"Globe in Fleet Street, 11th June, 1780.

My dear girl : I hope to return to Princes Court before 11 this night. Everything is quiet in the city and in this ward which I shall parade just before my return. Proof that Wm. Moore on the morning that Lord Mansfield's house was burnt gave a glass of wine to a man telling him *that* was Lord Mansfield's wine."

Arrests continued to be made. "A troop of the fugitives had rendezvoused in Combe Wood, and were dislodged thence yesterday [Sunday] by the Light Horse,"² a statement that accounts for the twelve cavalrymen doing duty at Combe Wood, near Kingston-on-Thames, scheduled in the "Disposition of the Troops," see Appendix II. p. 265.

On Monday eight rioters were taken in a house in White's Alley, Coleman Street, by constables assisted by soldiers. When the constables entered they found the men dividing plate plundered by them from houses they had fired.³

¹ P.A. 14th June.

² Walpole, xi. 220.

³ P.A. 14th June.

On the same evening a gang of forty concerned in the riots were apprehended in St. Giles's by Peace officers ; they were discovered by quarrels over their plunder. They were all fastened together arm by arm with strong ropes and conveyed to Tothill Fields Bridewell.¹

The *Gazetteer* of the 12th was fortunately able to state :

" Lord Petre's house at the upper end of Park Street said to be burnt by the mob, has not been attempted, nor now is there the least danger, as the Encampment in Hyde Park is just opposite to protect it."

The *Morning Post* of Wednesday had reported the house to have been "gutted" on Tuesday night.

With their revered leader in prison, the Protestant Association felt themselves compromised. The ambiguity of their position prompted a disclaimer ; it was drawn up on Sunday the 11th and appeared in the newspapers of the 12th :

PROTESTANT ASSOCIATION.

The Protestant Association think it their duty, as loyal subjects and members of Civil Society, in the most public manner to disavow any connection with those lawless rioters who have, for several days past, under pretence of opposing Popery, and promoting the success of the Protestant Petition, committed the most flagrant and dreadful depredations in and about the Metropolis. They cannot but feel the deepest concern for the distress that has been brought on many individuals by such unprecedented and illegal proceedings, and hereby publicly declare their utmost abhorrence of such atrocious conduct.

By Order of the Committee,

JAMES FISHER, Sec.

Goulston Square, Whitechapel, June 11th.

¹ P.A. 14th June.

The following letter was addressed to Lord Amherst :

Sr. The Enclosed paper was picked up by a sergeant of the 3rd Dragoon Guards in Devonshire Street this morning as he was on the Patrole.

Your most obedt. servt.

JNO. MANCEL,

Artillery Ground,
Monday morning, June 12th.

Lt. Col. 3 DG.

[*Enclosure*]

No Popery Down with it
Georg. the 3rd is a Roman Catholick

Dethrone him or else he will massacre you all. If your King is not Dethron'd he will be your utter ruin for he is a true Roman Catholick and it is Fit he should lose his Head.

A TRUE PROTESTANT.

[*At back*]

No Popery
Down with them that is. Lord George Gordon for ever.
Tho' he is in the Tower he will make them Rue for a Army of Scottish is coming 100,000 men in Arms for Georg will lose his Crown.¹

Even in a remote Devonshire town news was arriving that raised fears for relatives in London. On the 12th June at Honiton wrote Mrs. Humphry to Ozias Humphry, R.A., then living at 25 Newman Street :

" My dear son—I can no longer refrain from asking you how you do after all these great tumults and hurrieys whch I must bedg you will answer by the return of the post, and how your brother and his famaly is. . . . We are all happy to hear the ringleader of this rebellion is put pritty safe so as I hopes they will all be brought to Justtiss. I bedg

¹ *Amherst Papers*, ciii. folios 365-6. This document gives point to a remark of Johnson to Mrs. Thrale which has never been quite understood : "We frighten one another with 70,000 Scots to come hither with the Dukes of Gordon and Argyll, and eat us, and hang us or drown us."

you will not fail to answer this directly if not done all ready
which will oblige your affectionate mother.

ELIZ. HUMPHRY.¹

Gordon, though unquestionably “pritty safe,” does not appear to have been “pretty well.” The crisis of the excitement being passed, outraged Nature was taking her revenge :

“ To John Robinson, Esq., in Parliament Street.

Lime Street, 13th June, 1780 : Dear Sir—I received a message from Lord George Gordon to see him as he was not well. I accordingly went but could not get admittance. I think it proper to make you acquainted how this matter stands that you may direct me, or do what is proper on the occasion. Lord George is my near relative, and I have always been his physician. Yours, etc.

WILLIAM GRANT.”

Robinson, Lord North’s secretary, at once addressed Lord Stormont’s secretary :

“ I have this moment received the inclosed letter from Dr. W. Grant of Lime Street, a Physician who I believe is a steady good friend to Administration and Government. The purport of it makes me lose no time in transmitting it to you to lay before Lord Stormont for such orders to be given as may be agreeable.”

Thereupon the Lieutenant-Governor of the Tower received instructions running :

“ St. James’s, 13th June, 1780.

If Lord George Gordon wishes to have the advice of Dr. Grant we desire that he may be admitted to attend him as a Physician, and that you will observe the precautions usual on the like occasion. Please to inform Dr. Grant that he will be permitted to attend Lord George Gordon.”

¹ From an original letter in the possession of the Royal Academy of Arts.

VI

THE AFTERMATH

“The real lesson which the Riots taught was the necessity of re-organizing the police.”—LORD FITZMAURICE, 1912.

“There is great civilising power in the Policeman.”—LORD KITCHENER.

PEACE was being rapidly re-instated, but it was not in the streets of a normal-looking London that the civilian threaded his way unmolested. Hutton, the Moravian, notes on the 13th of June, that “the numerous bodies of regular troops quartered in all the great churches, besides the militia, and the association of volunteers, gives the whole metropolis a war-like appearance.” Romilly the same day writes : “The inhabitants of almost every parish are forming themselves into associations to protect their houses ; so that, hereafter, should any disturbance of this kind happen it will be very shortly quelled without the assistance of the soldiery.” Coutts, the banker, closes a letter on the 24th by observing : “London makes a strange appearance, soldiers instead of merchants on the Royal Exchange, red coats instead of black in St. Paul’s.” Wraxall records that “the patroles of cavalry, stationed in the squares and great streets throughout the West end,

gave London the aspect of a garrison ; while the camp formed in St. James's Park afforded a picturesque landscape ; from the Queen's House down to the vicinity of the Horse Guards, being covered with tents and troops."

Strongly impressed by the good order the *Public Advertiser* sent forth an informing paragraph on 14th June :

" The Cities of London and Westminster were never so well guarded nor so peaceable. In the night time there is not the least noise in any of the streets, but everything is profoundly still. No nocturnal revellers break lamps or knock down watchmen ; no midnight shrieks of prostitutes ; no hideous noise of rattles from the old men, no disturbance at the door of round-houses ; no burlesque on Justice in illiterate constables ; but a silence, decency and tranquillity prevails which reflect great honour on our present guardians. The late riots were shocking in their effects, but should a vigilant and regular police be established, nothing of the kind can happen in future. If housekeepers will, for their own and the public safety, patrol the streets armed, and secure every person who shall presume to break the peace, not only robberies will be prevented, but a much earlier alarm given of fires. All the night-houses ought to be suppressed : they are nurseries for thieves."

On the same day Lord Mansfield made his first appearance in Court since his enforced absence. It was the last day of Term :

" The reverential silence which was observed when his Lordship resumed his place on the Bench was expressive of sentiments of condolence and respect more affecting than the most eloquent address the occasion could have suggested."¹

The next day, the 15th, the Earl of Lincoln arrived "with news [from America] from General Sir Henry Clinton as will not be speedily forgotten. It spread

¹ Douglas, ii. 446.



NXVII. A VIEW OF THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE GUARDS IN ST. JAMES'S PARK
taken from the Queen's House the 5th of July, 1780, by Thomas Davies, Capt. Royal Regiment of Artillery

such joy over the metropolis that it almost drove from the recollection of its inhabitants the situation from which they had so lately escaped, a situation worse perhaps than that of the besieged inhabitants of Charles-Town." But the authorities had no relish for processional or other rejoicings, and they caused the following notice to be circulated :

" As the Great News received this day from America may incline many of His Majesty's faithful subjects to express their satisfaction by Illuminations and other demonstrations of Joy, which may give a pretence to ill-intentioned people to assemble in crowds, and endeavour to renew the late disorders ; It is earnestly recommended to all persons to forbear such demonstrations as they might tend to affect the Public Peace."

A letter from Lord Hillsborough to N. Pollhill, M.P., refers to the same matter, and indicates at the same time how eager was the Association to dissociate itself in the King's mind from any supposed connivance in the disturbances :

" St. James's, 15th June, 1780.

Sir : I lost no time in acquainting the King with what you informed me the subscribers to the Address desired should be mentioned to his Majesty, viz. that the Rioters were a very different kind of people from those who signed the Protestant Association.

I wish you joy of the important news of this day and hope you and every gentleman of the Borough will use your utmost endeavours to prevent illuminations, bonfires, etc., lest the ill-disposed should make use of the opportunity to begin fresh riots."

The inhabitants of Tooke's Court, of Castle Yard, and of Cursitor Street (*v. Plate XX.*) had applied for and received during the riots a patrol from the Northumberland Militia. They raised a subscription as a mark of their gratitude to the soldiers, and the

sum of £50 19s., together with an address, was presented this day to Lord Algernon Percy, Colonel of the Regiment. The fears of the householders in this locality arose by reason of the offices of the Sheriff of Middlesex, situate in Tooke's Court, having been violently threatened by the rioters.

The following letter is an exemplar of many that were addressed from bodies of parishioners to Lord Amherst at this time :

“ Bridge Ward Within, 15th June, 1780.

My Lord—We are directed, by the unanimous resolution of a very numerous and respectable wardmote, held at Fishmongers'-hall this day, to apply to your Lordship for the King's leave to associate ourselves, pursuant to the annexed plan, for the preservation of ourselves and neighbours, against a renewal of the mischiefs so recently experienced from a lawless and licentious banditti.

We have the honour to be, etc.

(signed by) JAMES SANDERSON and six others.

The Plan referred to above.

“ A battalion company of fifty of the opulent part of the inhabitants, armed, cloathed and taught the manual and platoon exercise at their own expense, and not to do duty out of Bridge Ward.”

Some of the City wards sent their applications to Col. Twistedon. These were forwarded under cover to Lord Amherst and dealt with separately. The Commander-in-Chief, however, took exception to some of the proposals :

“ Whitehall, 12th June, 1780.

Col. Twistedon. Sir : I have received the favour of your letter. If in the printed paper with the Lord Mayor's name annexed Firelocks are meant by the words ‘with their arms’ I wholly disapprove. No persons can bear arms in this Country but under officers having the King's Com-



XXVIII. A VIEW OF THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE GUARDS IN ST. JAMES'S PARK
taken from Lord Amherst's House, 20th June, 1780, by Thomas Davies, Capt. Royal Regiment of Artillery

mission. The inhabitants of the Borough of Southwark ; those of the parish of Covent Garden, and of some other parishes, have formed themselves into very useful and at the same time unexceptionable Associations, and if something of the same kind was adopted in the City, there is no doubt but much use and great security could arise therefrom, but the using of Fire Arms is improper, unnecessary and cannot be approved.

AMHERST."

When Lord Amherst's ruling was conveyed to those concerned there ensued a hurricane of indignation. The danger being past the aldermen were fired with heroism, and they required Colonel Twistedon to explain the qualification respecting bearing of arms. The main objection, he informed them, was the embarrassment the troops would experience in discriminating between armed civilians and armed rioters ; that, as it was resolved to order the soldiers to fire on the slightest renewal of the tumults, the lives of innocent persons would be endangered. The Lord Mayor was exceedingly nervous at risking the displeasure of the more bellicose aldermen, a few of whom became abusive, whereupon Colonel Twistedon told the refractory ones that city magistrates who had displayed so much cowardice during the Riots were unfit to command armed men. These incidents are embodied in a lengthy report which makes entertaining reading. Twistedon emphasises the serious difficulty to which the desire to carry arms had given rise. Men of all conditions were constantly running through the city with old and rusty firelocks, and when questioned, as suspected rioters, invariably answered that they were taking them to gunsmiths

to be repaired for training. The report was thus acknowledged :

“ Whitehall, 14th June, 1780.

Sir : I have laid before the King’s confidential servants all your letters upon this subject, together with copies of my answers to them, and I am very glad to inform you that your conduct has received their full approbation as well as that of, Sir, Yours

AMHERST.”

On the 15th June Lord Hillsborough wrote to the Earl of Buckinghamshire :

“ Since my last the riots that had almost threatened the dissolution of the Government and the destruction of this city have happily subsided. Our jails are full of criminals, but they are all of the lowest rank of the people, excepting Lord George Gordon who will probably suffer. The King goes to the House on Monday to give us a Speech upon these matters. . . . During our commotions no business but what related to them could go on ; we shall now resume our attention.”

The reflections of the Rev. Thomas Twining, Tory-coloured though they be, are replete with good sense ; they were addressed to Dr. Burney on the 16th June :

“ . . . What punishment is too much for an endeavour to inflame a people with religious animosities ? That kind of spirit has long been quietly laid ; and mankind in general, if left to themselves, have little propensity to that most horrible of all vices called zeal. . . . Can anything be so absurd as to talk of quelling such a riot as this by the civil power ? If it had not been for the army what would have become of us ? Now I will lay you a wager that when the House meets you will have fine orations against calling in the military, martial law, etc. . . . I care not how long we are under this dreadful military government about which such a ridiculous clamour is made. It is astonishing to me how any man can have the audacity to express a wish at such a time for the removal of protection. The civil power ! What is the civil power ? A power that will be civil to a mob, as the Lord Mayor was ? . . . Your true Englishman is never so happy as

XXIX. THE ENCAMPMENT AT BLACKHEATH



under a bad government. A perfect administration, could the experiment be tried, would dislocate the jaws of above half his Majesty's good subjects with Ennui."

George III.'s personal interposition in suppressing the riots was adversely criticised as Twining foresaw. The King, conscious thereof, wrote to Lord North's secretary, John Robinson, whose duty it was to keep his Majesty nightly informed of the proceedings in Parliament :¹

“ Queen's House, 13th June, 1780.
56 m. past 8 a.m.

I hope Lord North is closely employed in preparing the Speech to be delivered on Monday next from the Throne, wherein I must express the whole course of my conduct on the present moment, as done for all. Give a full and entire declaration of my sentiments of attachment to the Laws and Constitution of my Kingdom, and at the same time show that has obliged me to step forward to save all from confusion. The thought was my own, but all see the propriety of it. Indeed I will once more try to set People right as to my own conduct; if this does not succeed I shall never again attempt to follow any line but that of my duty, and expect no Justice or Gratitude in return.”²

On the 19th his Majesty duly read his Speech to Parliament, in which the following passage occurred :

“ The outrages committed by bands of lawless and desperate men, in various parts of the metropolis broke forth with such violence into acts of felony and treason, and had so far overborne all civil authority, and threatened so directly the immediate subversion of all legal power, the destruction of all property, and the confusion of every order in the state that I found myself obliged by every tie of duty and affection to my people to suppress, in every part, those rebellious insurrections, and to provide for the

¹ The great political influence exercised by Robinson was set forth by Mr. E. G. Hawke in the *Nineteenth Century* for October, 1923, in an article entitled “ William Pitt and some Deluded Historians.”

² Brit. Mus. Add. 37835, f. 123. It might well be thought such a letter would be addressed to Lord North; as a fact the King was at this time making overtures to General Conway to form a Government.

public safety by the most effectual and immediate application of the force intrusted to me by Parliament."

The King's Speech met with opposition in the House of Lords from the Duke of Manchester and a few other peers, who contended that the employment of the military to quell riots by firing on the people could only be justified, if at all, by martial law proclaimed under a special exercise of the royal prerogative. Thereupon, mellow in years, ripe in experience, rich in law, rose Lord Mansfield, who addressed an Assembly at once silent and throughout in a high state of tension :

" My Lords, I wish it had not fallen to my lot to address you on this occasion, but I must not shrink from a task which duty imposes upon me. That the law may be obeyed it must be known.¹ The noble Duke who last addressed the House is utterly mistaken in supposing that the employment of the military to suppress the late riots proceeded from any extraordinary exertion of the royal prerogative, and in his inference that we were living under martial law. I hold that his Majesty, in the orders he issued by the advice of his Ministers, acted perfectly and strictly according to the Common Law of the land, and the principles of the Constitution, and I will give you my reasons within as short a compass as possible. I have not consulted books, indeed I have no books to consult.² But as well as my memory serves me, let us see how the facts and the law stand, and reflect a light upon each other. The late riots were formed upon a systematic plan to usurp the government of the country ; the rioters levied war against the King in his realm and committed overt acts of High Treason. Insurrection for a general purpose—as to redress grievances, real or pretended—amounts to a levying of war against the King, though they have no design against his person, because they invade his prerogative, and the power of Parliament, which he

¹ i.e. declared.

² " On making this pathetic exclamation his auditors seemed to deplore the loss Lord Mansfield had sustained as a national misfortune and disgrace."

represents. The insurgents avowedly sought by force to compel the legislature to repeal a statute ; they violently assaulted the two Houses of Parliament while engaged in legislative deliberation ; and when left to themselves by the adjournment of the two Houses and the inaction of the Executive Government,¹ which it is not my part to censure—without formally promulgating a new constitution they for some days usurped supreme authority, and acted as masters of this metropolis. Besides High Treason they were guilty of many acts of felony, by burning private houses, and stealing as well as destroying private property. Here then we shall find the true ground upon which his Majesty (by the advice of his Ministers I presume) proceeded. I do not pretend to speak from any previous knowledge for I never was present at any consultation upon the subject. But, my Lords, I presume it is known to his Majesty's confidential servants that every individual in his private capacity may lawfully interfere to suppress a riot, much more to prevent acts of felony, treason and rebellion. Not only is he authorised to interfere for such a purpose, but it is his duty to do so ; and, if called upon by a magistrate, he is punishable in case of refusal. What a single individual may lawfully do for the prevention of crime and preservation of the public peace, may be done by any number assembled to perform their duty as good citizens. It is the peculiar business of all constables to apprehend rioters, to endeavour to disperse all unlawful assemblies, and, in case of resistance, to attack, wound, nay, kill those who continue to resist :—taking care not to commit unnecessary violence, or to abuse the power legally vested in them. . . . The persons who assisted in the suppression of these tumults are to be considered mere private individuals, acting as duty required. My Lords, we have not been living under martial law, but under that law which it has long been my sacred function to administer. For any violation of that law the offenders are amenable to our ordinary courts, and may be tried before a jury of their countrymen. Supposing a soldier, or any other military person, who acted in the course of the late riots, had exceeded the powers with which he was invested, I have not a single doubt that he may be punished, not by a court martial but upon an indictment to be found by the grand inquest of the City of London or the County of

¹ i.e. the magistrates.

Middlesex and disposed of before the ermined judges sitting in Justice Hall at the Old Bailey. Consequently the idea is false that we are living under a military government, or that, since the commencement of the riots, any part of the laws or of the constitution has been suspended or dispensed with. I believe that much mischief has arisen from a misconception of the Riot Act, which enacts that, after proclamation made that persons present at a riotous assembly shall depart to their homes, those who remain there above an hour afterwards shall be guilty of felony and liable to suffer death. From this it has been imagined that the military cannot act, whatever crimes may be committed in their sight, till an hour after such proclamation has been made, or, as it is termed 'the Riot Act has been read.' But the Riot Act only introduces a new offence—remaining an hour after the proclamation—without qualifying any pre-existing law, or abridging the means which before existed for preventing or punishing crimes.

I am fully persuaded that none of your Lordships will think that the acts of violence lately directed against myself can influence my exposition of the law, or can alter my principles. Although it so happened that I never once spoke in this House in support of the obnoxious bill to mitigate Roman Catholic penalties, and, as far as I can recollect, was not present when it passed through any of its stages, I approved, and I approve, of its principles. My desire to disturb no man for conscience' sake is pretty well known, and, I hope, will be had in remembrance. I have no leaning to Roman Catholics. Many of those who are supposed to have directed the late mobs are not ignorant of my general tolerating principles when the toleration of sectaries does not portend danger to the state. I have shown equal favour to dissenters from the Established Church of all denominations ; and, in particular those called Methodists can bear witness that I have always reprobated attempts to molest them in the celebration of their religious worship.

While I deeply lament the cause which rendered it indispensably necessary to call out the military I am clearly of opinion that no steps have been taken which are not strictly legal, as well as fully justifiable in point of policy. The civil power, whether through native imbecility,¹ through

¹ Lord Campbell imagined this to be a hit at the Government, but the Chief Justice was clearly censuring the constabulary.



XXX. LORD MANSFIELD

neglect, or the very formidable force they would have had to contend with, were unequal to the task of putting an end to the insurrection. When the rabble had augmented their numbers by breaking open the prisons and setting the felons at liberty, they had become too formidable to be opposed only by the staff of the constable. If the military had not acted at last, none of your Lordships can hesitate to agree with me that the conflagrations would have spread over the whole capital ; and in a few hours it would have been a heap of rubbish. The King's extraordinary prerogative to proclaim martial law (whatever that may be) is clearly out of the question. His Majesty and those who have advised him (I repeat) have acted in strict conformity to the Common Law.”¹

Bishop Newton, who was present, has recorded the impression made by the Chief Justice :

“ It was really wonderful, after such a shock as he had received, that Lord Mansfield could so soon recollect himself, and so far summon up his faculties as to make one of the finest speeches ever heard in Parliament to justify the legality of the late proceedings on the part of the Government, to demonstrate that no royal prerogative had been exerted, no martial law exercised, nothing had been done but what every man, civil or military, had a right to do in like cases, Lord Mansfield never appeared greater in any action of his life, and it would have been a right measure if his speech had been circulated throughout the kingdom to satisfy the apprehension of the people about the laws relating to riots which before were very little understood.”

The beneficial effect of Lord Mansfield’s utterances is emphasised also by Lord Stormont in a letter to Sir Robert Keith :

“ The appearance Lord Mansfield made in Parliament the first time we met after the dreadful outrage has added to his fame, by placing him in a point of view in which he never could appear before. To rise up at such a moment quite unprepared (for he had not the least intention of speaking that day), and with a calmness and precision equal to any

¹ The present writer has compressed Lord Mansfield’s speech to about half its length.

he had ever shown, to place the law of his country upon several great and important points in such a manner as to force assent from those who are not willing to give it, is perhaps *un trait unique* in the history of the human mind."

Bishop Newton's opinion—shared as it is by the Archbishop of York's letter to his son (*v. p. 101*)—that the law relating to riots was but little understood, finds its strongest confirmation in the Secretary at War's letter to Lord Stormont (*v. p. 72*). Mr. Jenkinson clearly supposed that the Riot Act was negative as well as positive in its effects, and that the military could not be employed until the conditions imposed by the statute had been fulfilled, namely, the reading of the Riot Act by a magistrate. This misconception made self-preservation almost impossible, as the ordinary civilian could not be expected to be better informed on the law than the authorities. But if the Justices were considered in law, and on all hands, the masters of the situation, their delinquency appears the worse, and Erskine did not shrink from describing the Riots as "crimes which the shameful indolence of our magistrates and the total extinction of all police suffered to be committed in broad day."

Gordon's trial for High Treason was deferred, but 135 other prisoners were soon after arraigned, of whom 59 were capitally convicted for various felonies connected with the disturbances. Petitions at once poured in praying for pardons—they still exist in the Public Record Office—and eventually 21 persons were executed at points near to the scenes of their crimes.

XXXI. A Dutch Conception of Lord George Gordon's imprisonment



What moral effects these trials had on Gordon no English writer records, but his solitude could not have been sweetened by them. Speculation on the subject appears to have been rife in Holland—whither many British had fled—and a unique illustration emanating from that country suggests that Lord George experienced great mental agitation. Though possessing artistic merit the following translation of the “explanation” from the Dutch shows that the print was to some extent a catch-penny :

“ A true likeness of Lord George Gordon taken from his portrait,¹ representing his Lordship in a wild despairing situation occasioned by the news from the Warden of the Tower that several of the rioters were hanged (as may be seen through the grate), which news his lordship heard with great astonishment but without emotion ; but as soon as left alone he flew like a wild creature, stamping his foot on the floor of the prison, which is here represented to the life.² The noise which his Lordship made caused the Warden to return and look through the wicket of the door, by which means he not only was an eye-witness, but also heard his Lordship exclaim : ‘ O Heavens, O God, was I then to be the occasion to bring so many unfortunate people to this shameful death. People of England, why was I misunderstood ; never did I intend inciting a Riot. Then, after keeping silence some time, he in a fit of passion cried ‘ Oh God ! what shall be my fate.’ ”

Passing then to Gordon’s own fate, Lord George on Monday, 5th February, 1781, was conveyed from the Tower to the Court of King’s Bench to stand his trial for High Treason. The Court, consisting of Lord Mansfield, Edward Willes, Esq., Sir W. Ashurst and Sir F. Buller, sat at eight o’clock in the morning. The jury did not withdraw till 4.45 on Tuesday morning, returning with their verdict at

¹ An obviously false statement.

² Another manifest falsity.

5.15 ; thus the proceedings continued over twenty consecutive hours. James Wallace, the Attorney General, Sir James Mansfield, the Solicitor-General, Dunning, Norton, Howarth, Bearcroft, Lee and Dallas appeared for the Crown, whilst Lloyd Kenyon and Erskine were for the defence. The record of this State Trial contains much that is still of interest, and quotations therefrom have been made to elucidate many incidents described in these pages. The trial ended in an acquittal, the jury not being satisfied that at the time Gordon gathered together the Associators at St. George's Fields on Friday, 2nd June, he either intended or knew that others intended the felonies that were enacted on Tuesday and Wednesday following. It was urged in Gordon's defence that the purposes and behaviour of the multitude that assembled on 2nd June, and the purposes and acts of him who assembled them, were the sole object of the present judicial investigation, and that the dismal consequences were undesigned, unabted and deeply regretted by the Associators and their leader.

" Only abstract from your minds," said Erskine to the Jury, " all that misfortune, accident, and the wickedness of others, have brought upon the scene, and the cause requires no advocate. When I say it requires no advocate, I mean that it requires no argument to screen it from the guilt of treason ; for though I am perfectly convinced of the purity of my noble friend's intentions, yet am not bound to defend his prudence, nor to set it up as a pattern for imitation ; since you are not trying him for imprudence, for an indiscreet zeal, or for want of foresight and precaution, but for a deliberate and malicious predetermination to overpower the laws and government of his country by hostile rebellious force."

The defence was much fortified when Kenyon, by his cross-examination, disclosed that one Hay, a principal witness for the Crown,¹ was little less than a Popish spy, and also by the failure of several of the other Crown witnesses to come up to their " proofs." It was of moment for the prosecution to establish that the riots in Scotland were so notorious that Gordon, in exhorting his adherents to imitate the Scotch, was in terms advocating violence. The witnesses called from Scotland, however, represented the disturbances in Edinburgh as very trifling, and would not be coaxed into giving any details of them. They were obviously screening Gordon, being fearful of facing their fellow-Scots on returning home. This inference finds strong support in a letter written after the apprehension of Gordon by Major Mercer to James Beattie :

" Sir James Campbell who commands the West Fencibles tells me that he has heard it asserted by people of credit that the brethren [in Scotland] continue to hold assemblies, and threaten to draw the ' sword of the Lord and of Gideon ' should a hair of Lord George Gordon's head fall to the ground."²

Reliance, too, was placed on Gordon's utterance to his followers in the Lobby : " The King is a gracious monarch, and when he hears that the people are gathering ten miles round he will send private orders to his Ministers to repeal the Popery Act." Was this the language, asked Erskine, of one whose object is to wage war against the sovereign ? Would a man, pressed the advocate, who was intent on

¹ This was not Bishop Hay mentioned in the first chapter.

² Beattie, p. 165.

undoing the King have betaken himself to Buckingham House and confessed his wickedness by offering to recall his followers from the mischiefs he had provoked ?

A telling piece of evidence in Gordon's favour, though devoid of all dramatic touch, came from a Mrs. Wittingham who was examined by Kenyon.

Q. Were you in a coach in St. George's Fields on 2nd June. *A.* Yes.

Q. Do you recollect Lord George coming to the coach ?

A. Very well ; my Lord asked leave to come in, which we immediately gave. He was nearly fainting away.

Q. Did he get into the coach ? *A.* He did.

Q. Did the coach continue there, or did it drive away ?

A. We continued there a few minutes before we went away. Some gentlemen surrounded the coach and we could not get off. They begged they might attend my Lord, but my Lord said he wanted no help nor assistance at all. They said, "Pray let us attend you to the House." He said, "No, by no means," and he would be greatly obliged to them if they would all go back.

Q. He did not choose to be attended by them ?

A. No. The coach put off, and set him down at the House of Commons.

Q. With or without his multitude attending him.

A. Without any body attending him.

Erskine's comments on this and on other evidence connected with the initial gathering are characteristic of his style :

"Mark Lord George's conduct when he heard from Mr. Evans (v. p. 31) that there was a low riotous set of people assembled in Palace-yard. Mr. Evans being desirous that nothing bad might happen went in his carriage to St. George's Fields to inform Lord George that there were such people assembled (probably Papists) who were determined to do mischief. The moment he told Lord George what he had heard, whatever his original plan might have been, he instantly changed it on seeing the impropriety of it. 'Do

you intend,' said Mr. Evans, 'to carry up all these men with the petition to the House of Commons?' 'Oh! No! No! not by any means.' 'Will you give me leave,' says Mr. Evans, 'to go round to the different divisions and tell the people it is not your Lordship's purpose?' He answered 'By all means.' Mr. Evans accordingly went, but it was impossible to guide such a number of people, though perfectly peaceable. They were all desirous to go, and Lord George was at last obliged to leave the Fields, exhausted with heat and fatigue, beseeching them to be peaceable and quiet. Mrs. Wittingham set him down at the House of Commons, and at the very time that he left them in the Fields in perfect harmony and good order, it appears, by the evidence of Sir Philip Jennings Clerke, that Palace-Yard was in an uproar, filled with mischievous boys and the lowest dregs of the people. Gentlemen, I have all along told you that the Crown was aware that it had no case of treason, without connecting the noble prisoner with consequences which it was in some luck to find advocates to state, without proof to support it."

Erskine's dislike of Roman Catholics was almost as deep-rooted as Gordon's, which may account for his gratuitous suggestion that the noisy element in Palace Yard consisted of Papists. No evidence has been adduced, before or since, that Romanists were present in any number.

Erskine made the following good point just before his peroration :

"In the trial of all that black catalogue which expired on the gibbets . . . no one fact appeared which shewed any plan, any object, any leader. Out of 44,000 persons who signed the petition of the Protestants, not one out of all that number was to be found among those who were convicted, tried, or even apprehended on suspicion; and out of all the felons who were let loose from prisons, and who assisted in the destruction and plunder of our property, not a single wretch was to be found, who could even attempt to save his own life by the plausible promise of giving evidence on the present occasion."

Erskine by his impassioned oratory on Gordon's behalf greatly enhanced his growing reputation as an advocate, and the jury were spellbound by his eloquence. But though marked by great forensic ability his speech was not without blemishes; his constant appeals to Providence were misplaced, his reiterated expressions of belief in Gordon's guiltlessness were improper, while professional etiquette was outraged by the opprobrious epithets repeatedly hurled at the Law Officers. It has been suggested that Kenyon's address had so lacked fire as to make it obligatory on Erskine to strain every nerve to break down the prosecution; nevertheless Kenyon's speech, unadorned though it was by any vestige of declamation, brought out all the main facts exculpating the prisoner from the charge of treason. But Erskine's persuasiveness won over the jury before the reply and summing up. Indeed Lord Mansfield was evidently much exhausted: the task of presiding and taking notes for twenty hours at a stretch was beyond the strength of a man of seventy-five, even of one still vigorous.

At the conclusion of Erskine's speech the Solicitor-General replied for the Crown in very temperate tones considering the attack on him "in a manner perfectly new in an English Court of Judicature." Lord Mansfield then charged the jury in a comparatively short summing up, only the concluding words of which need be extracted:

"I tell you, as the joint opinion of us all [the four judges], that if this multitude assembled with intent, by acts of force and violence, to intimidate, to awe, to force, to induce or

to compel the King, Lords and Commoners to repeal an Act, that is certainly High Treason. . . . If there was no intent of intimidation, either in the mob or prisoner, then he is to be acquitted. If you find he has any hand in inciting the people to commit those acts of violence, and that he intended it, you will find him guilty. If you are of opinion, upon the evidence, that the scale hangs doubtful between them, then it should hang upon the favourable side.”¹

Robert Watson, who harboured the most revolutionary feelings, has recorded his version of the trial :

“ The streets were lined with coaches and the crowd was immense. Lord George entered the Hall elegantly and appropriately dressed in a suit of black velvet : his deportment was firm and undaunted, and as a proof of the tranquillity of his mind in challenging the jury he objected, with a pleasant smile, to a ropemaker ‘ because he was interested by profession.’ The trial continued during 20 hours and much legal ability was displayed on both sides. Lord Mansfield in summing up the evidence ingeniously passed over what was most favourable to the prisoner, when Lord George perceiving the artifice immediately reprimanded him. The jury withdrew and in about half-an-hour returned with a verdict ‘ Not Guilty.’ There is reason to believe that administration were displeased with the verdict, for though it would have been dangerous to have punished him for what the people thought a virtue, yet it would have gratified their vanity to have sent him a pardon and to have appeared actuated by humanity in the opinion of those who were unacquainted with the real motives of their actions. Be that as it may, universal joy succeeded, expresses were sent to the most distant parts of the nation, and illuminations and bonfires announced the joyful news. Wherever he went the ringing of bells announced his arrival, and deputations came to meet him with the freedom of their cities. His correspondence extended over every quarter of the globe, and few plans of reform were undertaken without his advice.”

¹ One Catholic writer concludes a furious attack on the Protestants by saying : “ Gordon was ably defended by Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Erskine. Their best excuse for him was his insanity. On this plea he was acquitted.” (Dolman, vi. 219.)

Mr. Justice Fitzjames Stephen in his *History of the Criminal Law of England* (1883, ii. 274) says :

" My impression upon the facts is that the acquittal was right, and that, though High Treason was committed on the occasion, Lord George Gordon was guilty of nothing more than hare-brained and criminal folly in heading an unlawful assembly."

Incidental mention may be made of one person whom no opportunity has so far offered of introducing into the narrative.

Mrs. Fitzherbert, herself a Catholic, was twice married before she wedded George IV. Her first husband was Edward Weld of Lulworth Cove, Dorset, who died within a year of his nuptials. In 1778 she married Mr. Thomas Fitzherbert of Swynnerton in Staffordshire. They paid annual visits to London, residing in their house in Park Street, Park Lane, and here Mr. Fitzherbert delighted in entertaining the old Roman Catholic families. When the Riots broke out he strongly fortified his house, as did all the leading Catholic laity. He also made every effort in attempting to quell the tumult and in assisting priests to escape from the clutches of the mob. When peace was restored Fitzherbert found himself prostrated from his unremitting exertions, lung trouble supervened which defied all treatment, and he died at Nice the following May, aged thirty-seven.¹

It is perhaps only natural that of such dire calamities men should enquire in what social strata were to be found the minds that designed, and the

¹ *Mrs Fitzherbert and George IV.* By W. H. Wilkins, 1905, i. 19.

men that directed them. Persons of light and leading made no secret of their fears, some of their convictions, that unseen forces organised by the Opposition, by France and by America, each or all, had contributed to the catastrophe. The question calls for some little consideration.

Lord Hertford, writing to John Hely Hutchinson on the 12th June, mistrusts all three sources :

"Popery and religion were said to be the cause. They might be the motive with which the people were misled, but I cannot help suspecting that it has a political foundation, and has been supported and encouraged by foreign enemies."

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, writing on the 16th, is very free with her opinions :

"I am convinced our Ministers will not care to lay open the treachery of Persons of consequence, but will content themselves with hanging a few low wretches . . . I am convinced it is zeal for plunder that sets the mob at work. As to the design to do mischief at Woolwich, that must have had Americans and French for its author."

Said the Archbishop of York :

"No mob acted without a number of well-dressed men to direct them. Two were this day dug out of the ruins of a house where they ran from the military although the house was burning. One had ruffles, with a large diamond at his shirt breast, the other very well dressed with a plan of London in his pocket. It was publickly talked of at the Hague, Amsterdam and Paris that London would be in ashes on the 8th June."

Nor did the arch-prelate's attack end here.

"An insurrection on the score of religion," said Watson, Bishop of Landaff, "very much disheartened the friends of reform, and imboldened the Tories to circulate the basest calumnies against the principal Lords and Commons then in opposition to the Ministry. I myself saw a letter from the Archbishop of York accusing them of being the fomentors of the riots."

The opinion of Batt, K.C., has already been quoted at p. 176 : " American treachery and English treason I believe are at the bottom of it, and religion is the pretext."¹

Daines Barrington, Chief Justice of Chester (and the recipient of many of those famous letters written by Gilbert White of Selborne), wrote to Lord Hillsborough :

" Temple, 9th June.

My Lord—As the riots seem to be now subsiding the principal abettors will of course make immediately for Harwich and Margate. Should not therefore a proper person or persons be sent to prevent their escape?"

Lord Bute imparted his opinions on 27th June to John Home, the dramatist :

" . . . Under the colour of religious zeal three different purposes were pursued by three different sets of people. The breaking open the prisons and plundering houses were the natural operations of the abandoned populace. Lord Mansfield's house they have found marked for destruction (of which both mine in town and country had the foremost rank) belong to counsels you cannot be at a loss to guess [*sic*]. The attack on the Bank and the New River water-pipes and the particular fire-balls made use of came from those who really wished the total destruction of this once great country. Fanaticism in burning Romish chapels with a formidable list found of 35,000 Roman Catholic houses all destined to the flames may be deemed to proceed from a fourth junto."

Lord Kinnoul wrote :

" The plan was deep, and popery has no connection with the [intended] destruction of the Bank and the possession of the Tower. It interests the whole nation that the matter should be investigated and fully disclosed."²

¹ See also *Mary Hamilton, 1756-1816*. By E. and F. Anson, 1925, p. 96.

² Beattie, p. 164.

Suspicion of a hidden hand seems to have been entertained by Walpole. Writing to Sir Horace Mann on 14th June he remarks :

" One strange circumstance in the late delirium was the mixture of rage and consideration. In most of the fires the mob threw furniture into the street, did not burn it in houses ; nay, made several small bonfires lest a large one should spread to buildings. They would not suffer engines to play on the devoted edifices ; yet, the moment the objects were consumed, played the engines on contiguous houses. Much appears to have been sudden fury, and in many places the act of few. In other lights it looks like plan and deep premeditation. Whether it will ever be unravelled I know not, but when I know so little of what has passed before my own eyes, I shall not guess how posterity will form their opinions."

Among the documents at the Public Record Office are numerous letters addressed to the Secretaries of State embodying the views of a variety of people on this question. From these communications four have been selected, here designated as *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D*.

A. Secret information, 10th June.

" Mr. John Temple, who lives in Half Moon Street, frequently visited Lord George Gordon of late. His friend Dr. Oliver Smith is now shipping a considerable quantity of goods intended for Boston to be sent first to Holland. Bailston an American who was one of the leaders of the mob at Boston that destroyed the Tea is now in London. John Greenwood an auctioneer in the Haymarket is also an American, and for his zeal, ability and activity and dangerous talents as a factious man deserves to be watched.¹ He is in the confidence of Mr. John Temple and of the orator Dr. Smith, and has frequently gone backwards and forwards with letters from Dr. Franklin to some correspondents here, but what correspondents not known."

¹ This was the proprietor of Greenwood's Great Rooms where the Protestant Association sometimes gathered ; v. p. 16. He was a well-known artist.

B. Mr. Justice Daines Barrington wrote again on 12th June :

" 5 King's Bench Walks . . . It is said that the rioters were in most instances few in number which is true, but not the whole truth. The most active indeed were lads well trained by some of Dr. Franklin's people, as I conceive, in the diabolical practice of setting buildings on fire, and abetted by French money. These lads, however, were surrounded by a numerous mob of daring villains who would not prevent the incendiaries to be interrupted, as I know well from what hath happened to a person of my acquaintance who unfortunately interfered."

C. From R. Thompson, Master of the Dover Post Office, to Sir Stanier Porten :

" 12th June. In times of tumult like the present I think it my duty to inform you that not long since a passage vessel under the command of one Sharp (who pretends to be a burgher of Holland tho' an inhabitant of this Town but a few weeks ago), sailed from Margate to Calais with a great number of people on board."

D. James Hammond, Dover Customs House Officer, wrote to Sir Stanier Porten :

" 12th June. This morning arrived from Ostend Mr. Henry Farley, late clerk to Mr. Fector, who left his employ to go to Nantz about 18 months since to be agent and correspondent for the Americans at that part. What can be the reason of Mr. Farley's return at present does not transpire. However he ought to be watched as a suspicious person. I am happy in hearing that the Rebellion in London hath ceased, and hope the authors will be severely punished. Wishing this disagreeable business well over, I am, etc.

To these must be added the allegations that fell from the lips of the Attorney-General in his opening speech on behalf of the Crown at Gordon's trial :

" . . . Gentlemen of the jury ; the execrable designs of our inveterate enemies appeared in the proceedings of this

mob. What was intended by the opening of the prisons ? What was the meaning of the attack upon the national credit, the Bank of England ? Was that upon the ground of Popery, or for the repeal of the Catholic Relief Bill ? Other circumstances concurring, leave no doubt that greater and more destructive and horrid designs were formed than at first appeared."

The term "inveterate enemies" is ambiguous, for in the explanation to the satirical print *Ecclesiastical and Political State of the Nation* it clearly meant the Roman Catholics, but, as the Attorney-General purposely differentiates Popery from "inveterate enemies," he must be taken to refer to the French nation by this epithet.

Let us review the opinions of those who saw in the general upheaval the machinations of French and Americans. Lord Hertford's fears are based merely on suspicion, and pretend to no more. Mrs. Montagu's suggestion that in the design on Woolwich foreign enemies had a hand, is only to infer that it would be to their interest that work at the English Arsenal should be dislocated. Dr. Markham's views are curious. It is difficult to believe that a man who succumbs in a burning house should be found, on disinternment from the wreckage, to be wearing ruffles, articles presumably as combustible in the eighteenth century as now. That the coffee-houses of Amsterdam rang with the anticipated destruction of London is small matter for wonderment in view of Hickey's recollection of the alarm caused by the advices to English merchants in that city, augmented as they were by the constant arrival of refugees from the metropolis

(*v.* p. 157). There is an inconsistency too in the Bishop attributing outrages to foreign influence in one place, which, in another, he seeks to place at the door of the Opposition. It would require some hardihood to maintain that the Opposition had caballed with France. There was surely little to be gained in overturning a Government for the benefit of aliens.

Lord Bute alleges that three groups of malcontents engineered the outrages, and forthwith attributes the work to four, which scarcely conduces to lucidity. The prison-breaking he admits to be the fraternal solicitude of criminals at large for their incarcerated brethren. The demolition of Lord Mansfield's house and the threatening of his own houses are credited to the Opposition. The Bank and the New River were the objectives of foreign enemies, whilst the designs on Roman Catholic houses were part and parcel of the nefarious schemes of the Protestant Association. With one exception Lord Bute deals in nothing but conjecture. If the fire-balls employed by those supposed to desire the total destruction of this country could be shown to be of foreign manufacture, some foreign influence might be inferred. But his lordship either lacked information, or his letter was more intelligible to the recipient than it is to the reader of to-day, separated as they are by a century and a half.

But when an exalted public servant in open and crowded court announces that "the execrable designs of our inveterate enemies appeared in the proceedings of the mob," Englishmen might well expect that the

subsequent stages of the trial would put them in possession of facts in confirmation. Scarcely will it be credited that, after an opening thus worded, the trial proceeded to verdict without "our inveterate enemies" being again mentioned. The Attorney-General probably realised in time that in attempting to prove foreign influence he would be proving too much and thereby remove the burden from Gordon's shoulders.

The piece of evidence, however, that militates most strongly against a supposition of French or American influence comes, paradoxically enough, from the man suspected to be most deeply implicated—Benjamin Franklin. Franklin was unquestionably bitterly hostile to England, and at the time of the Riots he was residing in France for the express purpose of enlisting French sympathies in the conduct of the American rebellion. On 17th June he wrote the following letter to W. Carmichael, secretary to the American Legation at Madrid :

"London has been in the utmost confusion for 7 or 8 days the beginning of this month, a mob of fanatics joined by a mob of rogues burnt and destroyed property to the amount, it is said, of a million sterling. Chapels of foreign ambassadors, houses of members of Parliament that had promoted the Act for favouring Catholics, and the houses of many private persons of that religion were pillaged and consumed or pulled down to the number of 50; among the rest Lord Mansfield's is burnt with all his furniture, pictures, books and papers. Thus he who approved the burning of American houses, has had fire brought home to him. He himself was horribly scared, and Governor Hutchinson, it is said, died outright of the fright.¹ The mob tired with

¹ "On 3rd June at Croydon died General Hutchinson the celebrated Governor of Massachusetts. During the day he conversed well and freely on the Riots in London the day before."

roaring and rioting seven days and nights were at length suppressed and quiet restored on the 9th in the evening. Next day Lord George Gordon was committed to the Tower. . . . Sir John Dalrymple has been here sometime, but I hear nothing of his political operations."

Unless it be contended that Franklin was a deep and unscrupulous villain,¹ who is pretending surprise at incidents which either he has himself been instrumental in effecting or which he knows that the French government, with which he is in touch, is abetting, this letter should disarm criticism. Franklin imparts no information but such as was culled from the London dailies, which were, no doubt, read in France with avidity, and he appears to be sending a resumé of their contents to his American friend in Madrid, where English newspapers necessarily took longer to penetrate. Incidentally, it is curious to note that Sir John Dalrymple, who figured in Chapter I., is still devoting more time to political than to judicial duties.

Did the matter rest here the reader would probably deem the suspicion that America had actively co-operated in the Riots, or that English hands were stained with French gold, remained unsubstantiated. Doubtless both countries were glad enough to hear that England was well-nigh riven by them, and Franklin, writing the same day (7th June) to Samuel Wharton, caustically remarked: "They turned all the thieves and robbers out of Newgate to the number of 300, and instead of replacing them with an equal number of other plunderers of the publick,

¹ The present writer does not forget that in 1774 Wedderburn had branded Franklin as a traitor and a thief before the Privy Council over the interception of Governor Hutchinson's correspondence.

which they might easily have found among the members of Parliament, they burnt the building.”¹ There remains one further piece of evidence, however, which by virtue of its source should be brought within the purview of this summary. It occurs in Robert Watson’s *Life of Gordon*, a production quoted and criticised more than once in these pages. The passage runs :

“ During the Riots all the prisons were pulled down and their inhabitants set at liberty : Lord George was carried in triumph by the multitude, and nothing presented itself to the astonished spectator but devouring flames. It is certain that he who afterwards dragged a painful existence in a loathsome gaol might have then overturned the Government and founded a constitution agreeable to the wishes and true interest of the people. A hundred thousand men were ready to execute his orders, and ministers trembled for their personal safety. The unprincipled lawless banditti who commenced the riots were miscreants set on foot by French agents, for at that time France was governed by a perfidious King. Lord George was an enemy to plunder and devastation, he was shocked with the violence of their proceedings : and those excesses which Government afterwards laid to his charge undoubtedly saved them from destruction, for the timorous and those unaccustomed to revolutionary movements withdrew, whilst administration had time to recover from their panic, and to rally their desponding forces. I have already observed that the rioters proceeded from excess to excess without order or design, nor were the Ministry anxious to stop them in the beginning—they hate all popular assemblies and hoped to prevent them in future by disgusting the people with their proceedings, but they had nearly carried their deception too far, for before the conclusion something more serious than individual resentment was intended. It is supposed that whoever is master of the Bank and the Tower will soon become master of the City, and whoever is master of the City will soon be master of Great Britain. With this belief a plan was laid

¹ *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin.* Edited with a Life by A. H. Smyth. New York : Macmillan & Co., 1905-7, viii. pp. 95 and 99.

to seize them both, and so bring the matter at once to a crisis. But before this daring project could be put in execution the military, seconded by the militia, fired upon the people, a dreadful carnage ensued ; they were obliged to yield to superior force, and their hopes were entirely frustrated."

This outburst calls for some little enquiry as to the means of knowledge possessed by Watson. *The Times* of 22nd November, 1838, contained the following abbreviated report from a coroner's court. An inquest was held on Tuesday 20th November at the Blue Anchor Tavern, St. Mary-at-hill, Thames Street, on the body of Mr. Robert Watson, aged eighty-eight, who committed a most determined act of suicide by strangling. Mr. Brown, proprietor, stated that in March last deceased came to his house, representing himself as just arrived from Boulogne, and enquired if he could be accommodated with a lodging. He resided there about five weeks when he left to go to Bath. He returned a short time after, when he was seized, on his way to witness's house, with a fit of apoplexy and conveyed to Guy's Hospital. He was an inmate of the Hospital several weeks and was visited by witness. He returned to lodge at witness's house on Sunday night last, 18th. He was sitting in company with witness in the bar-parlour about ten o'clock when he said, "Mr Brown, you have never asked me who or what I am." Witness acquiesced, when the deceased stated that during the riots in the year 1780 he was Secretary to Lord George Gordon ; that he had been to every Court in the world ; that he had been the intimate friend of Washington, and he thanked God he had

lived to see America free ; he had repeatedly conversed with Napoleon. He had resided for several years in France, whence he proceeded to Rome, where he discovered a quantity of papers of the greatest importance to England.¹ In answer to questions put by the foreman of the jury the witness added that deceased was of very reserved habits. He spoke the language of every country fluently, and his company was courted by persons who visited the house. He had never explained his reason for visiting Bath, nor had he discovered any important document ; but at the time deceased was seized with the fit he stated he had lost his pocket-book containing some papers of vast importance. A piece of paper containing some writing in French found in deceased's bedroom was handed to the coroner and translated : "A man comes to give us the secrets of Government."

The next day's *Times* (23rd Nov.) stated that the previous day a very large number of people came to view the body, and that since the inquest no less than nineteen wounds [*i.e.* scars] had been discovered on various parts of the body.

Watson's so-called *Life of Gordon* when closely examined leaves a strong impression that there was no justification for stating that he had been Gordon's secretary during the Riots. That Watson was on close terms with Gordon at a later period is clear, and he probably saw much of him after 1788 when Gordon was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in

¹ Now known as the *Stuart Papers*, and published by the Hist. MSS Commission.

Newgate for other offences. The accounts Watson gives of Gordon's later life, until his death in Newgate in 1793, contain considerable detail, but his descriptions of the Riots are so meagre that probably it would be no inaccuracy to say that he was not even in London during their progress. When Watson wrote the *Life* in 1795 he had nothing to fear respecting the Riots which made reticence advisable. There emerges, therefore, no substantial reason for supposing that he had personal knowledge of French influence during the disturbances, nor can his subsequent intimacy with Gordon much strengthen the position, seeing that it was part of Gordon's defence that he was personally absent from all scenes of disorder.

It is not devoid of interest to remark that Charles Dickens appears to have accepted Watson's claim. *Barnaby Rudge* was published in 1840, consequently when Watson committed suicide late in 1838 the novel was in course of construction, and the *Times* report would be likely to arrest Dickens's attention. The great writer may have been one of the visitors to the mortuary ; he had good professional reasons for going if so inclined. Nor is it fanciful to suggest that the nineteen wounds were responsible for his giving the name of "Gashford" to the character of Gordon's secretary, who does not step, or rather sneak, into the story until Chapter XXXV. In the final chapter "Gashford" dies in an obscure London inn "not so many years ago" from self-administered poison. Though adventurer, spy and revolutionary to the back-bone, it would be unjust

to regard Watson as the unmitigated scoundrel that "Gashford" is represented.

Let us turn to the Opposition. Lord Hertford, Mrs. Montagu, the Archbishop of York and Lord Bute all suspected the "Outs." The Bishop of Llandaff spurned the accusation (*v. p. 217*), as did the Duke of Grafton, whilst Dunning in a report to Lord Shelburne wrote :

"As to the suggestion that the late disturbances have proceeded from or been in any degree countenanced by any man of rank or consequence in the country, and above all by any of those who have distinguished themselves as assertors of, or advocates for, the rights and liberties of the people in opposition to the weak and ruinous measures of the present Administration, whatever countenance those suggestions may have received from judges or others who have condescended to be the scandalous instruments of Ministers in propagating them. . . ." ¹

The charge has, nevertheless, been persisted in, and the historian of the British Army has not scrupled to say : "The Opposition of course abetted the mob. It was nothing to them that London should be burnt down, so long as the Government perished in the flames." ²

To these must be added the opinions of two peers whose views carry great weight. Lord Mansfield in his speech in the Lords said : "The late riots were formed upon a systematic plan to usurp the government of the country," while Lord Stormont observed to Sir Robert Keith "whether we shall ever be able to trace this conspiracy to its source I know not. That the evil was not accidental, but has a root, and a deep and foul one too, I firmly believe."

¹ Lansdowne House MSS., Fitzmaurice, ii. 58. ² Fortescue, iii. 296.

Neither peer charges the Opposition specifically, but clearly they had in mind forces other than those directed by the Protestant Association. That Lord Stormont could come to no definite conclusion is perhaps hardly less strange than the remark of Robert Watson, *soi-disant* secretary of Gordon : " Few events in the annals of Britain have excited more attention than the Riots of 1780, and perhaps none are involved in greater darkness." ¹

Romilly's views perchance fairly express the situation :

" The monstrous excesses appear to have been the accidental effects of the ungovernable fury and licentiousness of a mob, who gathered courage from their numbers, and, having ventured on one daring act, found their only safety in universal havoc and devastation. When once the rioters had gone so far as to burn down Newgate, one cannot be surprised at their entering on any enterprise, however daring : for besides thinking they might go on with impunity when they had left no prisons wherein to confine them, they gained as an accession, or rather as leaders, a set of criminals whose lives were already forfeited to their country. But religion has certainly been used as an instrument to excite these feuds. . . . The people have been grossly deceived and played upon by some designing villains. . . . It was a current opinion among them that the King was a Papist.² Some were sure of it ; they pretended to know that he heard mass privately, and that his confessor had the direction of all political concerns. A woman told a friend of mine that she hoped to see the streets stream with the blood of Papists. But nothing shows more evidently what base acts have been practised to excite them to madness than the handbill which was distributed on the morning of Tuesday entitled '*England in Blood* ; on Thursday will be published *The Thunderer*'. . . . "

¹ Watson, p. 31.

² There was circulated a satirical print of George III. at his Romanist devotions, a copy of which is in the British Museum, but it is too coarse for reproduction.

Romilly's impressions find support from Boswell. Boswell was not in London until the disturbances were stifled, but when bent on obtaining information he was not shy of asking questions :

" Whatever some may maintain, I am satisfied that there was no combination or plan, either domestic or foreign ; but that the mischief spread by a general contagion of frenzy, augmented by the quantities of fermented liquors of which the deluded populace possessed themselves in the course of their depredations."

So, too, Thomas Coutts, the banker, in a letter dated 24th June :

" There is a notion prevails with many people, and the Ministry seem to encourage it, that there are many dark and dangerous plots at the bottom of these riots. For my part I really do not think there is any foundation for such ideas ; however, it is right to be on the guard."

Although the City magistrates cannot be charged with inciting the masses to commit all the enormities of which they were guilty, the contention formulated in Chapter IV. that they watched with more than complacency riotous proceedings well-calculated to undermine the Government, and to replace it by a Ministry which would terminate the American War, finds support in the following three pieces of evidence :

(a) Major R. Vyse writes to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, the Irish Viceroy, on 16th June :

" As you have received the most authentic intelligence with respect to everything that has lately happened in London I will not trouble you with a detail of circumstances as execrable as extraordinary, and which never could have happened but for the design of two or three treacherous magistrates."¹

¹ Lothian MSS. 1905, p. 369.

(b) On the 19th June, namely on the day of the King's speech and Lord Mansfield's declaration, Alderman Sawbridge presented a petition to the House of Commons from the City of London praying for a repeal of the Bill granting relief and indulgence to Papists. Alderman Bull seconded : " Although through the baneful influence of the Crown," said he, " the former petitions have been spurned at and trampled upon, I yet hope the House will comply and without delay, lest the multitude lately at your doors should suspect that under the specious mask of moderation and tenderness for the Papists we have a design to sacrifice the security of the Protestant religion to the shrine of Popery." Wilkes, now completely dissociated from his brother Aldermen, opposed the Petition. " It was procured clandestinely," he retorted. " It was moved in Common Council after most of the Members, in the belief that all business was over, had gone home. Alderman Bull had taken no pains to quell the rioters." If Bull's attitude is evidence of consistency of opinion, it is equally good evidence that he thought " the multitude lately at the door " fully justified in intimidating the House.

(c) The third matter is the defence of Lawrence, the sailor indicted for being concerned in the destruction of Sir John Fielding's house (*v. p. 86*). Addressing the Court he said :

" I came from Deptford at 7 in the evening with two shipmates to Alderman Bull's house. Lord George Gordon was there with his chariot without horses. Three ladies came out of the coach to Alderman Bull ; I stopped a considerable time to look at them. Then I went to a linen draper's in

the Minories ; that might be a quarter before ten. I then went to Covent Garden. I got there about a quarter before 11. I drank at a public house there with a shoemaker and some women. They said Sir John Fielding's house was all on fire and all Bow Street. I went like a simple fellow up there with one Mortimer. He said I would not have you stand by the fire, you will get into trouble. Then four of us went into a house in Bow Street and had a tankard of porter. . . . ”

It was hopeless for Lawrence to deny being present, and he tried to escape by saying he visited various public-houses for the express purpose of evading the fire. The jury disbelieved him, and he was convicted and eventually hanged. But the importance of his evidence lies in the fact that he came direct to the Covent Garden district from the Minories. Lawrence assigned no reason for traversing this considerable distance. Can it be doubted that he had been advised at Jackson's, the linen-draper's, that his services would be appreciated at Bow Street Police Office ? Who this Jackson was, at whose house Gordon slept and whereat his partisans collected—it has been shown that Gordon and Pugh resorted there together—history sayeth not ; he is as forgotten as the linen goods he dealt in, but he unquestionably was one of the hidden intriguers.

“ There is a strange, but never-failing relation,” said Lord Chesterfield, “ between honest madmen and skilful knaves ; and whenever one meets with collected numbers of the former, one may be very sure that they are secretly directed by the latter.” Never was the force of this pregnant aphorism better illustrated. When the rabble perceived that the

City magistrates were fully prepared to give the petitioning enthusiasts all the rope they required, their self-appointed leaders seized the opportunity and snatched the rope.

Col. Twistleton, writing to Lord Amherst from Grocers' Hall on 15th August, 1780, says :

" . . . I have taken the liberty of sending a marked list of the Corporation of the City of London which I believe is pretty exact. The Aldermen and Common Council against the Government are marked with a cross. . . ." ¹

Col. Twistleton encloses a printed list of the members of the Corporation and of all the Committees, and in addition to the crosses set against many of the names (including James Adair the Recorder), there is added the following observations :

James Townsend (Mercer) FIREBRAND Frederick Bull (Salter) John Wilkes (Joiner) "Full of Mischief" John Sawbridge (Frame work knitter)	} Republicans } in Principle
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It is sufficiently clear that despite Wilkes' activities in suppressing the Riots Col. Twistleton mistrusted him.

There is no doubt that some sections of the mob operated under directions. Lord Mansfield, the Duke of Northumberland, the Prison authorities, and many others received notice of intended attacks ; the mob were called off from Lord Mansfield to assault Dr. Markham's house ; fire engines were employed at times to limit the course of the flames ; black and red flags, which were no part of the equipment of the Protestant Association, were waved to assemble the depredators, and it would be idle

¹ *Amherst Papers*, civ. f. 343.

to deny the activity of leaders when Hornyold's premises in Coleman Buildings were searched for books. Preconcerted action too may be traced to an unexpected quarter. When William Woodfall transmitted to Lord Stormont Gordon's manuscript which he had received for publication in the *Morning Chronicle*, he took the precaution to warn his brother, H. S. Woodfall, printer of the *Public Advertiser*, to scrutinise closely any contribution from Gordon. H. S. Woodfall answered : " I was aware of the latent mischief in Lord G. G.'s paragraph and I have of course omitted that part. . . . Of the mobs' exception to printers I have by accident found of which more when I see you," thus disclosing that the molestation of journeymen and apprentices had been under the consideration of the mobs' organisers.

From the rabble's standpoint the Riots, save in extent, were an unqualified success. The outcasts, the unwanted, the insubordinate, the brutal, had flouted the Constitution—a Constitution whose wheels, as they revolved in round-house, bridewell, pillory or press-gang, grated on the ears, albeit ears untuned and unwashed. The rabble had mocked, and exultingly mocked, the lawn-sleeved prelate ; they had bearded the clean-shaven and brocaded peer ; they had begrimed the flowered waistcoat and soiled the powdered curls of the man of fashion. They had filled their pockets, they had gratified their bellies ; they had exhorted artizans to rebellion, and had incited apprentices and servants to violence. They had set at defiance the military authority, they had disabled the constabulary and had well-

nigh wrecked the prison-system. They had revelled in pillage, they had played with flame, they had sported with carnage ; they had shown that war can be effectively waged without preliminary hymns to the Lord of Hosts—in a word they had fought *their* good fight.

Not so the Protestants. They opened the day with psalms, they supported themselves with enthusiasm, they returned to their habitations unkempt and faint there to lie down foot-sore and heartsick, ruminating on the rueful lesson that it is easier to unleash the hounds of war than to fetter the Papists.

Lord Amherst on the 16th June returned the casualties among the rioters ; he reported :

Killed by Guards and Association	-	-	-	109
By Light Horse	-	-	-	101
Died in the Hospitals	-	-	-	75
				<hr/>
				285
Prisoners under cure	-	-	-	173
				<hr/>
Total killed and wounded	-	-	-	458
				<hr/>

In Wraxall's estimate these figures were underrated, and in the opinion of competent judges it was over seven hundred.

The Riots were reflected in European politics. Richard Cumberland was in Spain on a secret negotiation. Leaving Lisbon on the 8th June he reached Madrid on the 19th to interview the Minister, Florida Blanca : "Florida Blanca came out of his closet and in a lamentable tone sung out the downfall of London ; King, Ministers and

Government overwhelmed in ruin ; the rebellion of America transplanted to England, and, heartily as he condoled with me, how could he under such circumstances commit his Court to treat with me," and thus the negotiations failed.

Burke frequently expressed the opinion that the Papists in England were few and inconsiderable. Were the fact true it would be weighty, but it entirely lacks confirmation. Not only has it been recorded that 35,000 Roman Catholic houses were scheduled for destruction (*v. p. 218*), but the following letter, written by Major J. Floyd on 20th June to Lord Herbert at Pembroke House, Whitehall, from the quiet Cathedral town of Durham will probably cause the reader some surprise :

" . . . I am heartily glad the phrenzy has ceased in the capital, and I hope there is no probability of its return. . . . There are a prodigious number of Catholicks in and about this town ; the street I lodge in is almost all Catholick : the people of this house too are Catholicks. This place is very large but not populous. It is overrun with the clergy, who in all countries take up a great deal more room than they ought. . . . The chief good I know of the clergy here is that they are quiet, and the populace is too inconsiderable to be an object of terror to the Catholicks."¹

It is not to be gainsaid that many Papists imprudently took more liberties than were allowed by the Act in their favour.

The Court of King's Bench was much occupied in March 1781 with actions for damages sustained during the Riots. They were brought against the magistrates of the districts where the injuries were committed, to obtain compensation from the respec-

¹ *Hist. MSS Com. 9th Report*, part ii. 1884, p. 383.

tive inhabitants in accordance with the provisions of the Riot Act. The quantum of damages was the only point in most cases for the consideration of juries, and so soon as the total of these was ascertained a pound-rate was levied upon the inhabitants for its liquidation. Robert Smith, as attorney to the Hand-in-Hand Fire Office, which had paid large sums upon their policies, brought several actions in the names of the assured, and obtained verdicts in all. In January 1782, by an order of the City of London Quarter Sessions, properties in the district affected by the riots were assessed at £28,300 for compensation to Thomas Langdale and others. The Inns were rated for contribution in the following figures : Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, £40 ; Inner Temple, £237 ; Middle Temple, £148 ; Clifford's Inn, £40 ; Staple Inn, £17 ; Barnard's Inn, £30 ; Furnival's Inn, £20 ; Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn do not appear in this assessment, not being within the city. Staple Inn was only in part within its administration.

"Barnard's Inn lost no time," continues the Antient (*v. p. 134*), "in repairing the damage their property had sustained by the conflagration. They were insured in the Hand-in-Hand Office, and recovered £1,223 10s. under the policy. The Inn had recourse also to the Act of Geo. I. making the hundred liable for damage done to property by riot, and commenced an action in Hilary Term 1782 against Pugh and Wright, the late Sheriffs of the City of London, for the recovery of compensation for the damage they had sustained. In this action they recovered damages to the amount of £1,944 which, with the sum received from the insurance office, was expended in reinstating the buildings burnt down, and the chambers thus restored constitute the most valuable portion of the property. The Society on

their part were assessed in the sum of £30 as their quoutum of the expense of reinstating the damage done in their hundred generally.”¹

Mrs. Wemyss² points the finger of scorn at Lord Stormont as one who urged the Lord Mayor to action, yet refrained from advising him in what manner to proceed. Mrs. Wemyss forms her opinion on the few letters addressed to Kennett which found their way to the contemporary pages of the *Annual Register*, and she fails to appreciate the existence of that sharp line which encircled the City of London when George III. held the sceptre, preserving to it its peculiar jurisdiction. In removing Temple Bar the pickaxe destroyed some ancient usages, and the construction of the Embankment has enabled all persons to enter the City heedless of boundary lines and with a diminished sense of awe. The City of London still retains its customs, but in the eighteenth century it was necessary to recognise them with great nicety. It was not becoming to give the law to the City’s Chief Magistrate, and Lord Stormont in addressing himself to the Lord Mayor proceeded with a caution not unlike that which a High Court Judge exercises to-day when permitting a writ to issue beyond the pale of his jurisdiction. No man in fact emerges from the week’s ordeal with a more enhanced reputation than Lord Stormont. His letters and directions

¹ This reads as if Barnard’s Inn recovered in all in excess of the damage suffered. In *Carter v. Boehm* Lord Mansfield said “ Insurance is a contract on speculation,” but this view was cut down in *Godsall v. Boldero*, where Lord Ellenborough held that fire insurance was a contract of indemnity and of indemnity only. Bowen, L.J., in *Castellain v. Preston* laid it down that insureds are not to get a windfall by a fire.

² *Temple Bar Magazine*, 1887.

selected for the purpose of this volume from the mass of official correspondence are probably sufficient in number to establish the Secretary of State's alertness from beginning to end and his activity by night and by day. He kept in constant touch with magistrates to whom, though sorely tried, he uttered no word of reproach ; and as an intermediary between the King and the War Office he was diplomatic, persistent and precise. Lord Stormont was not only courteous in all his dealings, but a man so fair-minded as to give evidence on behalf of one arraigned of High Treason by his own order, when requested so to do by the prisoner's legal advisers :

A brief survey of some of Gordon's more pronounced characteristics should perhaps be outlined in any attempt to elucidate the motives of his conduct. Be it remembered that by the very early death of his father he was deprived of any paternal guidance, and that his mother, if Walpole be trusted,¹ was scarcely a sober-minded person. That Lord George in boyhood possessed a delicacy of feeling the following letter written while he was at school, to his nurse, evinces :

“ Eton, Dec. the 9th, 1763.

To Mrs. Lewis in Castle Street, near the
White Hart, Seven Dials, London.

Dear Nurse : I hope you will excuse my negligence in writing, as it has been a very hard time with me. I think very long to see you and Richard. Your cake was very acceptable to me ; only I wish you had not put yourself in such trouble. Our holydays begin Monday week, and last four weeks. My mother, I fancy, spends the winter in Scotland ; but I shall come to town whenever she comes up,

¹ Walpole, iii. 230.

at which time I shall not fail to come and see you. I have not the least ailment since I saw you than a cold or two which no body escapes.

I am, dear nurse, your affec^{ate} humble servant,

G. GORDON.¹

Gordon entertained a deep-rooted antagonism to primogeniture—‘ infernal and unnatural ’ Robert Watson calls it—and to all that flows from it. There was certainly an incommensurate disparity between the income of £20,000 enjoyed by his eldest brother and the £600 allowed him by that brother. But though hereditary advantages pleased him not, he readily availed himself of the privilege of royal audience by virtue of being a Duke’s son. Gordon was, however, as entitled to criticise the policy of primogeniture, though a younger son, as Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, one of the ablest men of those times, was justified in commenting on the then gross financial inequalities of the bishoprics, although himself the occupant of one of the poorest sees. The Earl of Shelburne shared Gordon’s views.

Gordon likewise strongly reprobated gifts of sinecures and places, which without doubt were even a greater curse under Lord North than they had been under Sir Robert Walpole. To use the apt phrase of Mr. Asquith : “ Politics were then marked by a struggle between two or three groups of families for the sweets and spoils of office while the nation looked on very much like a modern crowd at a football match.”²

¹ *Brief Memoirs of Maj.-Gen. Sir John George Woodford.* By J. Fisher Crosthwaite, 1881.

² *Some Eighteenth Century Frenzies.*

That some of Gordon's contemporaries deemed him mentally unstable is not to be gainsaid. Robert Smith spoke of him as "the half-cracked brother of the Duke of Gordon." Gibbon, who must have heard him utter his wayward sentiments in the House, stigmatised him as "a mischievous madman," the Marquis of Bute did not hesitate to belittle his fellow-countryman as a "mad Scotchman," whilst Horsley, bishop of Rochester, designated him in similar terms to Lord Monboddo. Though these distinguished persons dismiss Gordon's character thus summarily—it is easier to put a case in a nutshell than to keep it there, said the late Lord Macnaghten—a Mr. F. Taylor, writing to the Duke of Manchester on 15th September, 1781, expressed himself more discerningly : "Yesterday Lord George Gordon was at the levée to deliver his book, but the King would not receive it. That genius will stir up something or other very disagreeable if not prevented." Nor should the remark of Lady Sarah Lennox be disregarded : "I hear that Lord George is wonderfully clever but wrong-headed."

Wraxall wrote :

"It will always remain disputable whether ambition, fanaticism, or alienation of mind contributed most to the part he acted in assembling and inciting the people to acts of violence. That Gordon was not insensible to the political consideration which he obtained from his personal influence over so vast a multitude cannot be questioned. To religious enthusiasm something may be fairly attributed ; but, more must be laid to the deranged state of his understanding, though nothing in his conduct could possibly subject him to be considered as insane. He appears in fact to have been perfectly master of himself, and in possession of all his faculties during every stage of the Riots ; nor is it to be

imagined that he either foresaw or intended any of the outrages which were committed after the second of June. But he had put in motion a machine, of which he could not regulate the movements, and unquestionably the mob which set fire to London was of a far more savage, as well as atrocious description, than the original assemblage of people who met in St. George's Fields."

In Mr. Asquith's view Gordon was "eccentric to the verge of madness, ignorant and uncultured, but a sincere fanatic."¹ That Gordon exhibited the ill-judged zeal of a frantic enthusiast is clear, but, with every respect for so weighty an opinion, it can scarcely be conceded that he was either ignorant or uncultured. Even his school-boy letter (*v. p. 240*) is the production of an educated youth. His predominant characteristics were a restless energy, a perverse acuteness, and an inability to distinguish fame from notoriety. He hungered and thirsted for the former, but perforce slaked his burning desires with the latter. To be always in the lime-light was his passion, and to ensure to himself the plaudits of the multitude was his cankering ambition. He proclaimed himself the champion of the people, and the rôle of the agitator came easily to him: "You, Mr. Speaker, have incurred the displeasure of the People"; "the Royal Family of Stuart have been banished for not attending to the voice of the People"; "I shall proceed to tell the People the truth"; "The leaders of the Opposition are not true friends of the People," were some of his darling cries.²

One of the inexplicable features of the political

¹ *Studies and Sketches*, 1924, pp. 72-4.

² Possibly a feeble imitation of the Elder Pitt. Pitt too had "hated Rome and all her works." Basil Williams, *Life of Pitt*, i. 350, 1915.

situation is the relation that subsisted between Gordon and the Speaker. Sir Fletcher Norton appears to have abetted Gordon in his delight in tormenting the King,¹ and to have made no attempt to stay his seditious speeches. It is surely marvellous in our eyes when a member is unrebuked for such an utterance as "The people had not yet determined to murder the King, they only considered they were absolved from their allegiance (*v. p. 23.*)". Outwardly his fellow-members seem to have endured his outpourings with amused listlessness, and failed to gauge their grave significance. But the following quotation from a rare pamphlet discloses the rather ugly fact that the Opposition regarded Gordon's attacks, in and out of season, as one of the levers by which the Ministry was to be overturned, and that they egged him on for their own purposes :

"Lord George has discovered a very weak head and perhaps a very bad heart by inflaming the minds of the people in terms that would disgrace his footman. The epithets 'infamous' and 'villainous' are only applicable to the miserable objects of our criminal law, and not to a Minister. When Lord North was so grossly attacked he shewed a delicacy and dignity when he mildly termed the language of Lord George Gordon as 'unparliamentary.' In the respectable place in which the words were spoken it was a gross insult upon the whole body of the people's representatives who were disgraced by the adoption of such Billingsgate expressions, and had the members not been blinded by party passions and ungenerous prejudices against administration they certainly would have resented it as a gross insult upon that august assembly."²

¹ The word "tormenting" is used advisedly, for Mr. Sichell is of opinion that George III. was "an anti-Romanist fully as fierce as Cromwell had been." *Life of Sheridan*, ii. 9.

² *A Serious Letter to the Public on the late Transaction between Lord North and the Duke of Grafton*, 1778, p. 15.

Or, in the words of Dr. Burney, "Into what a situation are we brought by the pusillanimity of one party and the malignity of another." ¹

In 1786 or 1787 Gordon became a Jew, styling himself "Israel Abraham Gordon." Let us hear Watson on this change of front :

"Lord George had long entertained serious doubts concerning the truths of Christianity . . . his conversion may have been due to his disappointments in life, which had soured his temper. . . . Perhaps he hoped to give celebrity to his favourite scheme of finance by embracing Judaism ; perhaps he expected to have led back the Israelites to their father's land . . . perhaps he chose rather to be considered as the leader of the Jews than the humble disciple of Christ. But I must confess though I have talked a thousand times with him upon the subject I was never able to discover his motive."

Preserve us from our biographers ! If Watson is to be relied on, the fact that Gordon was still in close correspondence with the Protestant Association in August 1786 indicates that he was far from being a scrupulously honest man.

On 23rd January, 1787, Gordon was summoned to the King's Bench on an information for having written and published *The Prisoners' Petition to the Rt. Hon. Lord George Gordon to preserve their lives and liberties and to prevent their banishment to Botany Bay*. The Court held it to be a libel on the Judges and the administration of Justice. He was also indicted for a libel on the moral and political conduct of Marie Antoinette, published in the *Public Advertiser* on 24th August, 1786. The trial came on in June following. He was found guilty, but given a day's

¹ Twining, p. 80.

respite before the passing of sentence. Gordon at once fled to Amsterdam, but being refused shelter he managed to return to England, and went into hiding in Birmingham, where he secreted himself among the Jews. In about six months, however, his whereabouts became known, and on 13th December, MacManus, the Bow Street officer, proceeded to Birmingham and, on a warrant issued by Mr. Justice Buller, apprehended Gordon.

On the 8th January, 1788, Gordon was brought before the Court, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment in Newgate for the Botany Bay libel, to be followed by two years' imprisonment for the libel on the Queen of France. Furthermore, on expiration of the sentence, he was to pay a fine of £500, and find securities for his good behaviour for fourteen years, £10,000 on his own account, and two other securities of £2,500 each.

His sentence having expired, Gordon on 28th January, 1793, appeared before the Court to give securities for his future good behaviour. Lord Chief Justice Kenyon, once his counsel, now presided. Gordon put forward two poor Polish Israelites who could not be accepted on account of their poverty ; consequently he returned to prison. Some months later jail-fever broke out in Newgate and Gordon was one of the sufferers. Dr. Lettsom attended him, but the skill of that distinguished physician was baffled, and Gordon died on 1st November, 1793, aged forty-two. The cell in which he passed away was, until the recent fire, at Madame Tussaud's, but the wax-worker who

modelled the effigy overlooked the fact that Gordon had become a Jew and grown a beard, and has represented him as clean-shaven. His last moments were embittered by the knowledge that he could not be buried among the Jews. He was interred on the 9th November in a vault in St. James's burying-ground on the Hampstead Road, but the exact spot where he lies is unknown. Gordon was never married, but he had made excursions into the highways and byways of *petticoat land*.¹

The following note on Gordon's mental condition is from the pen of Dr. H. Selfe Bennett :

" Health whether bodily or mental is a matter of degree. There is no absolute standard any more than there appear to be canons of art or taste which can only be disobeyed on penalty of declared heresy. *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*, and there is usually a possible appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. There are always times and seasons, customs and proprieties to be observed, e.g. an acrobat may stand on his head in a circus, but not in a church or in the well of a law-court. Conduct must not only be appropriate to station and occasion but is practically consistent throughout life in the normal individual. In the eyes of a physician sudden changes are dangerous, if not disastrous ; we speak not here of crises in fevers, but in moral behaviour. Nothing, on the other hand, is more commonly said about a suspected lunatic than a statement from friends ' He has always been like that ' or ' There has always been something odd about him. ' ' We do not think anything of that because he has always been a bit eccentric.' Now these testimonials to habitual character are generally given with a desire to influence the medical observer in favour of the relatives, whereas their effect is the reverse of favourable upon the examiner who receives them as evidence of instability

¹ " If Lord George Gordon has called the Archbishop of Canterbury the W— of Babylon it is very uncivil as it is the only W— his Lordship dislikes." Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu.

ab initio. The moral of all this preliminary lies in the application thereof to Lord George Gordon, for in his case we find evidence of both kinds, i.e. early restlessness and tendency to act upon impulse, lack of self-control leading to outrageous speech in the House of Commons and in his address to the King, an overweening sense of his own importance, followed by disappearance and retirement to an obscure Jewish community to whose creed he has become a convert for no obvious reason, and to his disadvantage as a champion of Protestantism v. Romanism.

To an orthodox Jew (Mr. Israel Solomons) there is nothing strange in the conduct of an ardent Protestant who changes his creed and becomes an Hebrew of the Hebrews and a stickler for the strict observance of the Mosaic law within a few weeks of his having been held an offender against the law of the realm, whereas to a Christian, whether Protestant or Romanist, such a sudden perversion from the religion of his forefathers appears eminently unreasonable."

The balance of opinion seems to lean strongly to the view that Gordon suffered from some species of mental derangement, yet the present writer cannot suppress the feeling that had he been well cuffed when indulging his unbridled insolence, and reminded that being a Duke's son should not save his skin, much of his vanity would have disappeared. His artfulness is well shown by the fact that his most impudent remarks were generally delivered in some privileged place or on some privileged occasion, or in letters from prison, whereby he was sheltered from rough handling. With such a record, his early death can only be regarded as a national blessing.

The characteristics of 'the mob'—a term so frequently occurring in these pages—were aptly portrayed by Henry Fielding in 1752; as chief magistrate at Bow Street he became well acquainted

with their minds and methods. He opens his remarks by saying :

" It may seem strange that none of our political writers on the English Constitution should take notice of any more than three Estates, namely, King, Lords and Commons ; all entirely passing by in silence that very large and powerful body which form the fourth estate in this community, and have been long dignified and distinguished by the name of The Mob."

After attributing much of their power to the Poor Laws of Elizabeth's reign he closes his essay with the just observation :

" There are two sorts of persons of whom this fourth estate do yet stand in some awe, and whom consequently they have in great abhorrence. These are a justice of peace and a soldier. To these two it is entirely owing that they have not long since rooted all the other orders out of the Commonwealth."

Clearly in the course of thirty years the fourth estate had ceased to hold either a magistrate or a soldier in fear ; and Hanway, writing shortly after the Gordon Riots, observed : " We have seen four riots in about fifteen years, each increasing in danger."

Simultaneously with these words the Earl of Shelburne advocated in the House of Lords the re-organisation of the police system, suggesting the establishment of one akin to that of the French, then world-famous for its efficiency, but as it was at times employed for political purposes his brother-peers turned a deaf ear. Consequently retribution rather than physical prevention continued to be the dominating spirit of the English criminal code, and in furtherance of the principle that punishments should be deterrent as well as punitive, the existing 160 crimes punishable with death were soon after

increased to 220. Oftentimes the law defeated itself, for if a highwayman, who had rendered himself liable to capital punishment for robbery, proceeded to murder his victim, he could be in no worse position, and there was the added chance that he had destroyed all evidence against himself. This penal code found an advocate in the Rev. Frederick Madan, who in 1784, in a publication *Thoughts on Executive Justice*, urged the unflinching execution of these extreme punishments, and strongly deprecated pardons. Madan's views finding favour with some of the judges, Sir Samuel Romilly, by this time in Parliament, was induced to put forth in 1786 a brochure, *Observations on a late publication intitled Thoughts on Executive Justice*, in which, following on the lines of the Italian penologist Beccaria, he pleaded that punishment should be made proportionate to the crime, and that the reformation of the criminal during his term of imprisonment should be attempted. Despite persistent and successful opposition an increasingly large party shared Romilly's views that the penal code stood in need of serious amendment.

Though the aim of purging the mediaeval penal legislation of its severities was a worthy one, it was not the real crux of the matter. The problem needing solution was the checking of inchoate crimes. Patrick Colquhoun, an extremely active magistrate, wrote in 1794 :

“ The most enlightened foreigners, who have visited this metropolis and contemplated the nature and organization of our Police system, join in one general remark upon it—

' That we have some shadow of Police for apprehending delinquents, after crimes are actually committed ; but none for the purpose of preventing them.' "

How slowly the function of preserving and defending the community from crime improved may be gathered from evidence taken before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1816 to inquire into the State of the Police of the Metropolis. The following questions put to William Fielding, a stipendiary magistrate, and a son of Henry Fielding, with his answer thereto, are germane :

Q. Do you not think that an active body of police to be drawn from that class of the community forming householders, more particularly interested than any other class in the suppression of disorder . . . would be a much better mode of putting down such disturbances, than instantaneously, as has been the custom for many years past, of calling in the assistance of the military ?

A. No doubt can be entertained upon the question. If a powerful Police could be collected more early, the effect you speak of would attend it. I recollect what passed on the riots of 1780. It happened to me to see a great deal of these riots. I remember that when the house of my uncle Sir John Fielding was destroyed by the mob, if there had been only ten constables there at the time the riot commenced it would have been most certainly saved. And I remember well that when my Lord Mansfield's house in Bloomsbury Square was entered, that if there had been a band of constables stationed there at the origin, that would have had a very considerable power of preventing the accumulation of that species of mob which soon collected.

The numerical strength of the Police Force in 1780 is not easily ascertainable, but in 1796 it consisted only of 1000 peace-officers, of whom merely 149 were paid to devote their whole time to duty. There were in addition about 2000 watchmen, mostly beyond work. This inadequate con-

stabulary was worked on a plan lacking homogeneity : some ruffian guilty of serious crime in Clerkenwell had but to betake himself in all haste to Southwark, where he would be well-nigh as secure as if he had fled the country. This ineffective machinery continued until a famous Home Secretary clearly perceived that police prevention—immediate prompt action upon the manifestation of crime—was the crying need of the country. On 15th April, 1829, Sir Robert Peel delivered a historic speech in the House, in which he reminded them that Committees of the House had been appointed to investigate the subject of the Police in 1793, and that Committees were again appointed in 1812, 1816, 1822 and in 1828 ; that they were all the result of alarm at some unprecedented outrage at the time, that they produced no effect in improving the law, and that the subject was lost sight of as soon as the cause of the alarm subsided. He gave details of the number of boroughs around London, including Chiswick with a population of 1500, possessing not a single night watchman. It was not surprising, he urged, that the wealthy district of Kensington should find itself unprotected from house-breaking and thieving by three drunken beadle. He was convinced that the increase of criminals had not been necessarily occasioned by the increase of distress amongst the population. He believed the criminals to be trained and hardened profligates incited to the commission of crime by the lax system of police held out to them. It was the duty of the Legislature, he reiterated, to take prompt and decisive measures to check the

increase of crime which was proceeding at a frightfully rapid pace. With a police established upon a proper system they would be able to dispense with a military force in London for the preservation of the tranquillity of the metropolis. After outlining a scheme for replacing voluntary local efforts by a comprehensive statutory police-force with unity of design throughout the metropolitan area, Peel moved for “ leave to bring in a Bill for the Improvement of the Police of the Metropolis.”

Peel carried Parliament with him, and the passing of the Metropolitan Police Act 1829 created the modern police force, while the right of maintaining civil order within the City was made the exclusive privilege of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Councilmen.

Soon the “ Peeler ” or “ Bobby ” made his appearance on our streets, but so far from being regarded as an aid to good order, he was received with the derision of the multitude and the contempt of a few magistrates averse, in declining years, to learn new lessons. But the lessons had to be learned, and by dint of the energy and foresight of successive Home Secretaries, Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners, fortified by Acts of Parliament improving the *status* of the constabulary, there has been slowly evolved that magnificent force numbering well over 200,000 whose vigilance and training preclude the possibility of a repetition of the enormities of 1780.

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- Trial = *The Trial of Lord George Gordon for High Treason at the Bar of the Court of King's Bench on 5th Feb. 1781.* Published under the Inspection of his Lordship's Friends, to which are subjoined several Original Papers relating to the subject. Printed by J. Mennons & Co., Brodie's Close, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh. [1781.]
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- Twining = *Recollections of a Country Clergyman of the Eighteenth Century.* Being Selections from the Correspondence of the Rev. Thomas Twining. John Murray, 1882.
- Twiss = *The Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon.* By Horace Twiss. 2 vols. J. Murray, 1844.
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Wemyss = "Lord George Gordon and the Riots of 1780." By Millicent Erskine Wemyss. *Temple Bar Magazine*, vol. lxxix. 1887. Reprinted in *A Notable Woman and Other Subjects*. Eden, Remington & Co.

Wendeborn = *A View of England towards the Close of the Eighteenth Century*. By F. A. Wendeborn, LL.D. 2 vols. 1791.

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Wraxall = *Historical Memoirs of My Own Time*. By Sir N. W. Wraxall, Bart. Edited by R. Askham. Reprint. Kegan Paul & Co., 1904.

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APPENDIX I

ABSTRACT of the number of Troops stationed in
and passing near London from the 4th to the 11th
June, 1780 :¹

Sunday, 4th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	6,287
	On the march	-	-	1,500	}	
Monday, 5th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	8,020
	On the march	-	-	3,233	}	
Tuesday, 6th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	9,767
	On the march	-	-	4,980	}	
Wednesday, 7th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	9,904
	On the march	-	-	5,117	}	
Thursday, 8th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	10,710
	On the march	-	-	5,923	}	
Friday, 9th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	11,443
	On the march	-	-	6,656	}	
Saturday, 10th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	10,547
	On the march	-	-	5,760	}	
Sunday, 11th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	10,238
	On the march	-	-	5,451	}	
Monday, 12th	{ Stationary -	-	-	4,787	}	12,367
	On the march	-	-	7,580	}	

¹ P.R.O.

APPENDIX II

DOCKETED : Posts, 12th June, 1780,¹ in London and Environs.

Disposition of Post, 12th June, 1780.

Foot Guards.

Stationary Posts not in the Relief	King's Guard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	104
	Queen's Guard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32
	Tilt Guard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61
	Kensington	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
	Exchequer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	205
	Bank	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	534
	St. Pauls	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
	Ormond Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31
	Sardinian Minister	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42
	Admiralty	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
	Lord Stormont	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Sir G. Saville	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Count Haslang	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
	Lord G. Germain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Clare Market	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Bromley Mills	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Warwick St. Chapel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Lord North	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Camp Duties	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	76
	Piquet, Queen's House	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
	Stable Yard Gate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
	Constitutional Hill Gate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Total									1,455

N.B.—328 of the Detachment at the Bank are from the Savoy Battalion.

¹ P.R.Oa.

Disposition of Post—Infantry

Excise Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	150
Bridewell Hospital	-	-	-	-	-	-	180
Borough	-	-	-	-	-	-	150
Asylum	-	-	-	-	-	-	150
Clerkenwell New Prison and Hicks' Hall						-	95
Museum	-	-	-	-	-	-	454
New River Head	-	-	-	-	-	-	65
Boarded River, Bush Hill, near Edmonton						-	50
London Bridge	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
Custom House	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Lord Bathurst	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Lord Beauchamp	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Lord Hinchinbroke	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Count Pignatelli	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
Powder Magazine	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Hay Magazine	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Grosvenor Gate	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Piccadilly Gate	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Water Works	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Dam Guard	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
General's Guard	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
Lincoln's Inn Fields, Temple, etc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	561
		Total	-	-	-	-	2,142
Guards	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,455
		Total	-	-	-	-	3,597

Disposition of Posts—Cavalry

Artillery Ground, 3rd Dragoons	-	-	-	-	-	150
Guildhall, Light Dragoons	-	-	-	-	-	40
St. Paul's Churchyard	-	-	-	-	-	20
Comb Wood, near Kingston	-	-	-	-	-	12
On Court Duty	-	-	-	-	-	50
The Remainder at the Kings Mews.						

Ordered the 11th June, 1780.

Fourth Dragoons to Cobham	-	-	-	-	-	25
Victualling Office, addtl. guard	-	-	-	-	-	50
Caen Wood, of the Cambridge Regt.	-	-	-	-	-	100
The rest of the Regiment to Hampstead and Highgate.						
Intended to be left only at the Archbishop's Palace, of the Northampton Regiment	-	-	-	-	-	150

APPENDIX III

John Boddington replied :

DEAR SIR,—Be so good to acquaint Lord Amherst that arms and ammunition are delivered for the Victualling Office, and for Deptford are sent by water. Those for Greenwich Hospital are ready when sent for, and I have acquainted Mr. Stephens therewith and that no Guard can be spared. Those for Mr. Rous are ready to be sent to the Temple, but no Guard can be spared to attend them.

Yours most obediently,

JOHN BODDINGTON.

P.S.—We have got from 8 to 10,000 arms in this day from the different gunsmiths.

The Lord Mayor sent for 4 Pieces of Cannon, but his requisition was not complied with.¹

This letter conclusively shows how distrusted was Kennett, the Lord Mayor.

¹ Amherst Papers, CIII, f. 148.

APPENDIX IV

SHORT extract from a memorial prepared by the clerk of Bridewell Hospital for the information of the Common Council of the City on the application of the Hospital Committee to be refunded the sum of £613 13s. 8d., paid from the Hospital funds for the maintenance of officers and soldiers during the Gordon Riots. The memorial has only recently been discovered (June 1926) by the Rev. E. G. O'Donoghue, who has been good enough to supply a transcript. The subject will appear in greater detail in vol. 2 of the *History of Bridewell Hospital*, now being prepared by Mr. O'Donoghue.

"Upon Wednesday the 7th of June about 5 o'clock in the evening, soon after the King's Bench Prison had been set on fire, a great number of disorderly persons assembled before the gates of Bridewell Hospital, and in a tumultuous manner forced themselves into the Inner Court, broke open the prisons, destroyed the furniture and released the vagrants then under confinement, and though they were with difficulty prevailed upon not to burn the prisons, they threatened (with dreadful oaths and execrations) to return again at 7 o'clock the same night for that purpose. Whereupon the clerk immediately made application to your Worships (then assembled at Guildhall) praying assistance from the magistracy, but through the great variety of applications of the like nature from various parts of this metropolis at the same moment, and the general confusion that then prevailed, no relief was obtained or promised. The conflagration increasing and becoming general by the Fleet Prison, the Toll Gates and Lodges on Blackfriars Bridge, and divers houses in the neighbourhood having been set on fire by the mob, applications were made to the Commander-in-Chief and to the Secretary of War for a guard, who severally promised a detachment should be made

from the army or militia, which was accordingly sent with the utmost expedition whereby the Hospital, precinct and neighbourhood were preserved, the officers having orders to extend their protection within certain limits in order to cover and preserve many of the adjacent streets."

The military remained at Bridewell for 64 days.

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